

# RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT DURING AUSTERITY: AN EXPLORATORY, EXPERIENTIAL STUDY WITHIN COMMUNITIES IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

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A thesis submitted to the University of Gloucestershire in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Health & Social Care.

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## Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Gloucestershire.

Signed

Date

7 May 2019

## Abstract

Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) had embarked on a process of change. Reductions in public sector funding, increases in the numbers of vulnerable people and the need to save money across its services were outlined within its 2015 strategy 'Meeting the Challenge 2 - 'Together We Can'. The principle aims of the research were to develop a different relationship between GCC and communities - to enable them to become more resilient and empowered.

The research used multiple methodological approaches to explore the personal and political meanings of empowerment and resilience during this period of change. The approach was novel and unique in this area, utilised to explore the experiences of individuals within those communities. This included Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, to investigate the experiences of participants (Elected councillors, Council Officers, Voluntary Sector employees, Volunteers, Carers) living and working in Gloucestershire, and Discourse Analysis which focussed on the role and impact of language.

The findings of the research reflected an iterative and interpretative cycle, highlighting key findings in the convergence and divergence of meaning in terms of community, empowerment and resilience. This was categorised and developed through four distinct but overlapping themes of 'Problems, Power, Identity and Relationships'.

For all of the processes, policies, regulations and progress articulated in the discourse and encountered in experience, participants often described empowerment as a simple awareness of others and confidence to act in a more open and transparent way. Resilience, understood through practices of coping with the state system and its behaviours could help to recover or rediscover the nature of the relationship with communities. Yet regardless of the context, there appeared to be recurrent patterns of behaviour on both sides. 'Recovery', a concept encompassing both empowerment and resilience is proposed by the thesis as a key framework for developing future practice, policy and research.

## Conference Presentations

Childs-Evans, J. (2015). Poster Presentation: *The impact of County Council Policy (Together We Can) on the development of active and empowered communities*. University of Gloucestershire. University of Gloucestershire Research Symposium, July 9<sup>th</sup>.

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## List of Acronyms

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BIT	Behavioural Insight Team
CDJ	Community Development Journal
GCC	Gloucestershire County Council
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
DA	Discourse Analysis
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
DfE	Department for Education
DFID	Department for International Development
DH	Department of Health
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
EAC	Enabling Active Communities Policy
EBP	Evidence Based Policy
EU	European Union
FOI	Freedom of Information Request
FYFV	Five Year Forward View
GAVCA	Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary & Community Action
GCCG	Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPPS	General Practice Patient Survey
HSCA 2012	Health & Social Care Act (2012)
HWB	Health & Wellbeing Board
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
NHS	National Health Service
NHSE	NHS England
JEAC	Joint Enabling Active Communities Policy

JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
KC	Kids Company
LEO	Local Engagement Officers
LGA	Local Government Association
MJ	The Management Journal
MNW	Measuring National Wellbeing
MTC	Meeting the Challenge - Together We Can
NAO	National Audit Office
NICE	National Institute for Clinical Excellence
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PHE	Public Health England
RCT	Randomised Control Trial
STP	Sustainability and Transformation Plan / Partnership
UK	United Kingdom
UoG	University of Gloucestershire

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

When you say those words, “the last time that we would see our home” What goes through your mind, what pictures do you have?

*...All our memories there [of Grenfell Tower], my mother, my father growing up there... my childhood memories, kind of moments of happiness. Gatherings I had with friends and family and... you know, laughter and food being enjoyed. Many things, umm...you know, my children being born there... and you know, I, I dare not delve into it too much, you know, I try not to think about it like that too much, cos I know that will just, that will break me down.*

“...What would you say to the Council and to the Prime Minister?”

*I would say to them. Do the right thing. The community has lost all faith, all confidence in you all - from before the fire when you didn't listen to the concerns of residents ... with the refurbishment of the tower...and now, you know the mistreatment, the negligence, continues on. 6 months up until now after the fire...people were still...have not been rehoused...please prove us all wrong. Give us justice. Bring those people to account...whether they were part of the social elite or not. Prove us wrong. Show us that the justice system was fair and universal and was not harder on the poor man than you know, the rich man or someone from a high kind of social standing... Because that's the feeling the community was feeling. They described us as one of the most deprived areas in the country and so on - ok - we might have been materially deprived - but we weren't socially, we weren't morally. The response of the community after the fire showed otherwise.*

Mohammed Rasoul, Grenfell Tower resident speaking to the Radio 4 'Today' Programme, December 2017

## 1.1 Introduction and aims of the research

The research aims for the study were described as twofold. Firstly, to analyse the social processes of resilience and empowerment alongside social and political discourse. Secondly, to critically evaluate their relationship and role in the development of resilient and empowered communities in Gloucestershire, during a period of austerity. The perspectives of Mohammed Rasoul, a resident of Grenfell Tower where over 70 people lost their lives in a fire came at the end of the period of PhD study. Pertinently, within a few short paragraphs the perspectives of Mohammed regarding the relationship between local councils, national government and communities encapsulated much of relevance to the approach, themes, findings and conclusions arising from the research.

Primarily, the importance in giving extended time to listen to and interpret the individual perceptions and descriptions of community, empowerment and resilience. Descriptions could evoke poignant memories, describing the power of people and place, belonging and joy, identity and relationships. At the same time, they could generate seemingly contradictory meanings or awareness based on traditional approaches that employed deprivation or levels of need. These negative descriptions could feel irrelevant or unrecognisable to those in the communities it concerned.

Furthermore, community, empowerment and resilience were complex concepts, where meanings could move between the general and specific, the emotive or practical and could be applied to individuals, groups, the 'system' or the state. These understandings might span many areas of interest, crossing boundaries of personal health and wellbeing, of functional and relational networks, of justice, both the criminal and social understandings.

This complexity became significant for those within communities in terms of their relationship with the state in its many guises, their expectations and access to power. Individuals may have had a limited say in the construction of, or influence over the definitions and applications of community, empowerment and resilience, nor the actions arising from policies that followed. Much attention could be given within the wider discourse to finding, explaining and justifying 'what works'.

Knowing what worked consequently, would build resilience and empower people. However, it could be argued that Mohammed was looking for equal attention to be given to justice and consequences for what hadn't worked, rather than the justification of what had. For those living in communities what worked could vary from day to day, rather than a replicable process which could be rolled out simultaneously across different areas. Arguably 'what was the last thing that we agreed worked well' was possibly a more appropriate or accurate question to be asked.

Whilst academic research can provide insight into unanswered questions, this was also something that had meaning for Mohammed and his community. For example, before the fire it was perceived that the council was not listening. Following the tragedy, the government, in both local and national responses, were criticised in terms of immediate actions taken. This included the selection of the inquiry chair and panel in terms of diversity of background. The appointed auditors Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG), subsequently resigned from the inquiry due to concerns over conflicts of interest. Appointments had been perceived as creating the potential for a whitewash, or to avoid exploring the wider underlying issues of social housing policy. This resulted in additional members appointed by the current United Kingdom (UK) Prime Minister, Theresa May to reassure survivors and the local community (May, 2018).

Although the inquiry at the time of writing was still underway, it was possible that many relevant rules and laws were followed and not broken. Instead many would likely require some change, revision or added guidance in response. Understandings of informal rules, tacit knowledge and cultural factors, for example in terms of changes in landlord ownership, training and experience of council officers would be a potential area of interest. As a legal commentator reflected after the event "...performance indicators certainly didn't include 'knowing and involving your tenants..." (Peaker, 2017).

This thesis was undertaken during a period of austerity. However, in the case of Grenfell Tower, the Royal Borough of Chelsea and Kensington had £274m in its reserves prior to the event. It was one of the richest authorities in the country.

Following the fire, all of the reserves were intended to be used to support the families affected. The authority had a programme 'City Living, Local Life' to help communities and councillors identify local issues and take practical steps to make the area a better place. There was a team of community champions working across the borough. The Notting Dale ward where Grenfell Tower was located adjoined the Norland ward. The Norland ward was the first area in London to agree a neighbourhood plan in 2013 as part of the powers within the Localism Act. These plans sought to allow communities a greater voice in the planning of housing, businesses and shops to speed up delivery. As of September 2017, this was one of only five agreed out of one hundred and eleven neighbourhoods in London (Neighbourhood Planners.London, 2017). Therefore, a tragedy took place in the midst of an arguably strong financial position for the local authority with a wide range of activities supporting local communities.

Whilst Grenfell was a high-profile national incident, locally in Gloucestershire the corporate memory and current practice of Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) had also been affected by two key events before and during the period of the studentship. These were the ruling of unlawful library closures following judicial review in 2011 and the Ofsted judgement of 'inadequate' Children's Services in 2017.

The author's studentship was also jointly sponsored between the University of Gloucestershire (UoG) and GCC. This was the latest in a series of collaborations between the two organisations. A key element in development of the research aims and the resulting thesis was to balance academic requirements alongside the need for specific outputs relevant for GCC. Further detail on the development of the studentship and proposal is outlined in section 3.3. Questions over research and relevance to the real world, and benefits for each partner and the PhD student were not new (Macmillan & Scott, 2003). Neither were the constraints which organisations could bring to bear when looking for 'political ammunition' or the extent to which the nature of the research was agreed at the outset (Hayward et al., 2014). However, the GCC sponsor wished to provide genuine autonomy and freedom for the researcher and approach. This it was hoped would complement

and shine an alternative lens on existing internal GCC analyses. This intention was also reflected in support for the selection of a novel qualitative design and recognition of the academic timescales and requirements, which did not always align with those of GCC. Participant representation from all political parties were requested as part of the sampling strategy, with any wider potential constraints managed through a collaborative steering group meeting at regular 6-8 week intervals over the course of the studentship. In terms of ethical considerations, the project was deemed to be low risk. Ethical considerations and their management are outlined in sections 4.5 and 5.5.

The challenges of balancing these requirements manifested themselves in many forms over the life of the PhD and were noted as appropriate throughout the thesis. These issues were captured within the researcher's reflexive journal, with aspects of the research design and limitations considered as part of the conclusions in Chapter 9.

## 1.2. Research approach

The research was an exploratory, experiential study using multiple approaches to understand the personal and political meanings of empowerment and resilience during this period of declared change. Whilst change was a feature of the thesis particularly in terms of the analysis of discourse, many of the differences described, justifications, problems and solutions were not new either from the perspective of participants or those generating the expert and official discourse. Arguably recurring patterns of system and organisational behaviours were evident.

A key aspect of the author's research therefore was to understand how these concepts were used as part of creating a collective story or discourse. This was explored using Discourse Analysis, focussing on a selection of twenty-three relevant official or expert texts. These were analysed to consider the wider conversations or debates alluded to in a group or society as a whole, and the relationship with other texts (Gee, 2014a).

Personal experiences were explored through the completion of interviews with nineteen participants, working across a variety of settings in Gloucestershire, and

analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The phenomenon explored for the purposes of the research was the experience of living through a period of austerity and this context is outlined within section 1.3. Whilst it can be argued a phenomena might only appear once in the sample within qualitative social research (Wilmot, 2005), the selection criteria were intended to create a group sharing the phenomenon and for whom the research questions had meaning (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

Participants were described as 'Boundary Spanners', a concept subject to numerous definitions, but for the purposes of this research were defined as those "... individuals who have a dedicated job role or responsibility to work in collaborative environments" (Williams, 2013, p. 19). Boundary spanning was of relevance as such individuals interact and broker between organisational and geographic contexts, providing opportunities for learning and the influence of power and behaviours (Paraponaris, Sigal, & Haas, 2015). Boundaries had relevance for community development as they could be interpreted as lines of delineation or barriers, yet at the same time "...porous and increasing the number or flexibility of connections" (Quick & Feldman, 2014, p. 677).

The rationale for the approach aimed to complement current sources for analysis or engagement undertaken by GCC, for example surveys and consultations. According to Stoker (2010), seeing like a citizen, rather than a state, was a challenge. As Smith et al. (2009) point out, the process of sense-making was not experienced in isolation, but within a given context, and this could be key to a phenomenological understanding (Lamb & Cogan, 2016). Patterns of relationships in social networks mattered (Giuffre, 2013), and multiple methods of data collection could assist with validation (Creswell, 2012).

An in-depth approach therefore afforded increased time to access experiences of participants, to explore their understanding of empowerment and resilience to develop a nuanced account. The design therefore sought to be empowering and relevant for participants, being led in part by the themes they generated. However, there were expectations that the research would generate insights that could be used to inform policy-making and practice within organisational and community

settings. These were expected to include increased insight of groups and their complexities, along with recommendations for community facing role development, skills and use of language for GCC.

### 1.3 The national context

The research was set within the historical context of the financial crisis of 2007/2008, where nations across the world responded to the resultant economic challenges. Within Europe, many nations adopted austerity policies and made cuts in public expenditure (Quaglio, Karapiperis, Van Woensel, Arnold, & McDaid, 2013).

Across the country councils adapted to the economic climate and embarked on their own processes of change. In Gloucestershire, this began with the GCC 'Meeting the Challenge' programme in 2011. Continued reductions in public sector funding, increases in the numbers of vulnerable people and the need to save money across its services were outlined within the 'Meeting the Challenge 2 - Together We Can' (MTC2) strategy. MTC2 argued that GCC services were designed in a different time period, one that did not fit with modern lifestyles and trends. The principal aims therefore were to address the task, by developing a different relationship between GCC and communities, that would enable communities to become more resilient and empowered (Gloucestershire County Council, 2015b). The MTC2 strategy formed the context for the research and the original information for the studentship is included at Appendix 1.

GCC was not the first to use the phrase 'Together we can' as a means to signpost its intentions regarding the development of a relationship with communities. This was also the title of a Home Office action plan from the labour government published in 2005, authored by the Civic Renewal Unit. This noted mobility between geographies and jobs affecting the sense of belonging to a single community. Complexity and diversity of services had made it difficult for people to know where to turn. This had created "...a chasm opening up between government and citizens" (Home Office, 2005, pp. 4-5).

The then Labour Home Secretary, Charles Clarke outlined the intention of the twelve government departments supporting the 'Together we can' plan, seeking to:

...transform the relationship between citizens and the state, to pass more power, control and influence from the centre to local communities...The Together We Can action plan is an important benchmark in giving people control over their own communities... It shows how local people with the proper support and guidance can transform their own lives. (2005)

'Together we can' was also the name of an ethnographic research report published by the Young Foundation in 2013. This looked at asset-based approaches for service transformation in terms of people with complex needs, and articulated three 'calls to action', also a common phrase utilised in the wider discourse. The actions covered themes around learning, commissioning and collaboration, with the research aiming to explore the gaps between the aspirations and realities of participant lives. The report concluded that the literature and policy recognised "...the stage is clearly set for the adoption of asset-based approaches ... including explicit support for Time Credits and time-banking as a means of achieving this agenda" (HM Government, 2012, as cited in The Young Foundation, 2013, p. 4). These examples illustrated the enduring relevance of and interest in community development at all levels of government. In addition, they highlighted how the specific use of common phrases, collaborative and community related language could be deployed across a wide range of strategy and policy.

### 1.3.1 The Big and Shared Societies

In 2010 the UK coalition government prime minister, David Cameron launched the idea of a 'Big Society'. Although attempts to recast the nature of citizen - state relationships had been part of a consistent direction of travel for many decades (Hastings & Matthews, 2015), this was explained as a significant culture change for society. Although the freedoms of mobility and diversification of services were highlighted as problems in the Labour government 'Together we can' plan, central government was now specifically described as the main barrier to historic progress. This had blocked the dispersal of power and diversification of service delivery through its micro-management and control from Westminster. The Big Society idea also aimed to enable communities to access more power to do the things they wanted to do so that "...people in Britain worked out the answer to the big social

problems” (Cameron, 2010). The Big Society is considered further within the literature review and Chapter 6, in the exploration of the discourse.

As part of the UK coalition government plans, the Localism Act of 2011 sought to aid individuals and communities with a series of new rights formalised in law. This was described as the “...essence of the Big Society...” (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011, p. 1) . The act offered new freedoms and flexibilities for local government, planning reforms and local decision making over housing. Other significant acts during the period included the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (HSCA 2012) and the Care Act 2014.

Alongside these developments, increased life expectancy and public expectations in England had resulted in calls for new partnerships and integration between local authorities, the NHS and communities in delivering services to improve health and wellbeing (NHS England, 2014). Communities could therefore assist with preventative approaches towards public health and also support the increasing challenges of an ageing population. This was pertinent as approximately two thirds of UK government spending was spent on state pensions, welfare, health and education (HM Treasury, 2017) and a similar proportion of the GCC budget in 2015/16 was spent on vulnerable adults, children and families requiring support (Gloucestershire County Council, 2015b).

This environment therefore had wider implications for communities, as the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) noted:

Researchers and policy makers have for some time now been concerned with how a more relational and community-led approach might lead to greater resilience and better outcomes, particularly within those sectors currently experiencing the most acute funding concerns such as welfare, social services, policing, local government and health. (2015)

It was relevant to consider behaviour change given that such factors have been shown to account for up to 40% of the determinants of health (Forouzanfar et al.,

2015). This has led to calls that “...what ails you isn’t necessarily what kills you” (Boseley, 2013), recognising the non-medical influences on wellbeing. However, interest for major research funders to pursue areas had been argued as difficult. This was due to challenges of determining intellectual property rights for behavioural changes in the areas of diet or physical activity and the consequential lower requirement for drugs and vaccines (Forouzanfar et al., 2015).

For all the policy intentions and sentiments of the ‘Big’ society as outlined in the Localism agenda of the 2010 coalition government, at the end of the research period in 2017 the UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, made calls for a ‘Shared’ society. This suggested the British people had been locked out of the discourse, with an inequity between the ordinary working people and the rich and the powerful (May, 2017a). The groups benefitting from the status quo were defined as a small number from the bank and business sectors, along with politicians, lawyers and journalists involved in scandals who seemed to play to another set of rules. The common-sense consensus politics had not worked, causing people to look for simple answers from elsewhere.

The actions of these people therefore exacerbated societal problems and had implications for communities, as Theresa May explained:

...they [people from the hard left and far right] stand on the shoulders of mainstream politicians who have allowed unfairness and division to grow by ignoring the legitimate concerns of ordinary people for too long...Politicians who supported and promoted an economic system that works well for a privileged few, but failed to ensure that the prosperity generated by free markets and free trade is shared by everyone, in every corner and community...(2017a, p. 5)

Whilst there was unequal access to the same benefits, the statement implied a wider failure to deliver equality. Yet, perhaps contradictorily, the mainstream was also argued to have helped citizens prosper, rather than failed them. Although seeking to deliver a shared message, much was also set in oppositional terms. For

example, there were the people who looked for other answers, the politicians outside and within the mainstream, the ordinary people and the privileged few. The argument proposed was that the system hadn't worked for enough people, and within such a short statement there was much complexity. Using the metaphor of standing on shoulders as with much of the discourse was open to interpretation, offering a level of ambiguity. The metaphor could imply a more aggressive seeking of control or to have the upper hand. At the same time the statement could be understood in the academic sense of a search for truth, recognising one's own limitations and the efforts of others. This metaphor was positioned alongside the legitimate concerns of ordinary people, arguably adding a subtle credibility and shift of blame away from the activities of the mainstream politics.

### 1.3.2 Local context

Local governments and their staff provide and deliver a wide range of public services across the world and were often the "...public face of the state" (Walker & Andrews, 2013, p. 4). GCC worked within a complex and changing environment in partnership with other public, private and voluntary organisations. However, what 'the state' was and interpreted as, its agency and effect, were often contested within the academic literature as an abstraction with little meaningful value being argued for consideration ontologically "...as if real" (Hay, 2014b, p. 459).

Therefore, local authorities were located within systems, where the constituent relationships required understanding and attention to be given to them (Nicholson & Orr, 2016). In the course of initial observations and discussions, changes in structures, roles and relationships could create a degree of complexity for those living and working in communities which was hard to penetrate. This could prompt the need for organisations to assist, such as the Gloucestershire VCS Alliance. These organisations sought to help community groups assimilate information, network and build personal relationships as part of their development. At the same time those working in the 'system' appeared to organise around an array of task and finish groups, committees, or functions. Such differences could have further implications for the understandings and meaning of empowerment and resilience.

This was further complicated by a series of internal GCC reorganisations of structure and related staff turnover. Wider organisational priorities, such as the bid for Gloucestershire Combined Authority, development of Sustainability and Transformation Plans or Partnerships (STPs) with the CCG or the Gloucestershire 2050 vision created regular reassessments of competing pressures and priorities. Alongside these developments, past events played also into the perception of present considerations. These could manifest as individual reflections on various personalities, through to significant organisational events marking the corporate memory, such as a judicial review over county library closures in 2011. In this event, GCC was ruled to have acted unlawfully and not paid due regard to their equalities duties.

A further layer of complexity concerned the perceptions of parties regulating the services commissioned by GCC, for example the Care Quality Commission or Ofsted. GCC received an overall inspection rating of 'Inadequate' from Ofsted as part of the 2017 inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. Within this overall inspection rating it was given 'Inadequate' for Leadership, Management and Governance. The previous full and comparable inspection took place in 2011.

Ofsted noted in the 2011 inspection that:

Leadership and management are adequate. The Chief Executive became directly involved in the safeguarding improvement agenda 18 months ago when serious concerns emerged about the quality of service in children's social care services. The key issues were identified at that time but turnover of senior managers, coupled with the reorganisation of services, a significant rise in the number of children and young people with child protection plans and high caseloads, meant that momentum was lost for some time. The appointment of key experienced senior managers in summer 2010, together

with increased staffing levels and clear priorities, is reinvigorating the service. (2011, p. 34)

On returning to GCC in 2017 for the next comparable inspection, Ofsted noted the previous solution had become problematic again:

Instability in the workforce is having a significant impact on the quality of practice. The turnover of social workers and managers is high. The majority of social workers have less than two years' post-qualifying experience and, for too many, the caseloads are too high and include complex cases that require a good depth of knowledge and experience. (2017, p. 29)

As a result of this report, the Chief Executive in post during both periods of inspection, has apologised publicly for the contents of the 2017 inspection (Tickle, 2017). Judgements on the services regulated by CQC and Ofsted were relevant, as overlapped with the vulnerable groups comprising a large proportion of the GCC budget. The MTC2 strategy also sought to encourage increased community involvement with such groups to assist in the management of demand of services they might require. However, regulatory judgements could have an impact on GCC priorities and resource allocation, with resulting implications for the extent of empowerment and resilience within communities that GCC could realistically support.

#### 1.4 Key concepts: community, empowerment, resilience, the state and wellbeing

Definitions of these concepts varied and were numerous. Community Development itself was vague in nature and had been argued to have ever been thus (Craig et al., 2011, cited by Mayo, Mendiwelso-Bendek, & Packham, 2013). Empowerment and resilience had been considered as linked concepts having profound influences. Understanding their boundaries and convergence were relevant for communities to avoid the "...promise of more than is possible..." (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 344).

'The state' was also understood in a variety of ways. It has been described as neither cohesive nor fragmented, but resulting from the interplay and shifts in various directions (Hay, 2014b). However it was defined, it was often proposed as covering the provision of certain basic goods or services (e.g. Housing, Health and Education) and the regulation of a variety of private activities (e.g. Banking and commerce), which maintain and promote wider health and well-being (Alcock, Daly, & Griggs, 2014). Whilst a full discussion of the nature of the state and role of local authorities were beyond the scope of this research, local authorities currently had a statutory duty to improve the health and wellbeing of their population.

#### 1.4.1 Community and community development

Community was a valued dimension of society and popular means of addressing policy problems locally, nationally or globally (Gilchrist, 2009), and communities could form and be defined around a variety of common connections, for example identity or interest. Community work or development usually sought to foster and build capacity of groups to define their own concerns, acquire the resources to address them and then work on providing responses (Stoecker, 2012). The extent to which a community was defined and described as empowered or resilient therefore had significance for service delivery and perceptions of societal or individual wellbeing, both in terms of policy and practice.

As an emerging area for work and study, community development was initially linked to the development of countries within the British Empire. During the 1960s and 70s the Community Development Projects (CDPs) were instigated, the first large scale government funded experiment to use social action to address a range of issues faced by twelve deprived areas in Britain. These projects were argued to have emerged from a political realisation of conflicts and contradictions that are still relevant today. For example, the capacity of the welfare state to deliver in line with public expectation, pathological or structural causes of poverty, integration of public service delivery and the mix between local and national implementation (Banks & Carpenter, 2017). There was also a similar understanding and objective that encouraging community self-help could "...take some of the load off statutory services" (CDP, 1970, cited by Loney, 1983, p. 3), which could relieve the pressure

on an already stretched system. In the many decades that have followed these projects, community work has been seen to have a dual role. On the one hand it was part of, or associated with the state, yet also had a role to being critical of the state's ability to reach poorer sections of society. Such criticisms were historically described as the delivery of "...poor services for poor people" (Poppo, 2015, p. 38).

As part of research development, the author attended the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of the Community Development Journal (CDJ) in July 2015. Entitled 'Why Community Development? Continuity and Innovation', the conference brought together academics and practitioners from across the world to discuss the ongoing relevance and future of the CDJ and community development work. Whilst definitions of community and community work were clearly contested, two key individuals regularly arose in conference discussions, Paulo Freire and Saul Alinsky.

Freire lived and worked with poor South American families, where he sought to use education to combat oppression, bring change and creatively question the status quo. By being immersed in their situation, beginning the process from their understanding, and by teaching individuals to reflect on their position and then act, he theorised that this could bring change or create 'critical consciousness'. Alinsky took a potentially more radical approach, arguing that community organizing was needed to directly confront issues such as racism, inequality and poverty. Alinsky started from the view that individuals were primarily motivated by self-interest, which could also be a common community interest. He listed a series of 'rules' for challenging organisations or any bodies that needed to be brought to account or listen to the needs of a community.

Definitions of community, community work and its relationship to the state could therefore be argued to link to theoretical positions on the nature of society itself and power relations (Poppo, 2015). For example, pluralist theories posit that power in liberal democracies was not solely vested in any particular group. Therefore, individually or collectively, groups could be effective and have influence over some issues. This could be in shaping or directing the outcomes of policy, for example, social policies enacted by the state. Alternative views include socialist or feminist theories arguing conflict or inequalities affect access to power, based on a material

or gender-based analysis of society. Balancing the interests of these differing views and taking them into account could influence empowerment and resilience. Within Gloucestershire, the MTC2 strategy reflected the hope that communities would have more say, and thereby improve results and value (Gloucestershire County Council, 2015b).

#### 1.4.2 Empowerment and resilience

These concepts were important as empowerment has been argued to influence the control individuals and communities have over their lives, and resilience influenced the ability to maintain well-being in times of difficulty (Public Health England, 2015).

There were a variety of applications of resilience and empowerment as concepts, often used interchangeably and lacking agreement over definition (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). They were defined in the early stages of the research as a process, which could result as an outcome where individual and group adaptation could occur within adverse environments (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). Both concepts were noted as important building blocks for better community self-help, health and wellbeing (Public Health England, 2015).

Whilst the concepts of community, empowerment and resilience initially appeared straightforward or commonly understood, they were contested. This lack of definition could be problematic when developing methodologies for exploring this area (Steiner, Woolvin, & Skerratt, 2016), yet offered opportunities within that ambiguity for policymakers (Bache & Reardon, 2013) not least to reconcile shared political and practitioner interests (Chmutina, Lizarralde, Dainty, & Boshier, 2016).

The design of policies and extent of state intervention could impact upon resilience and empowerment (Public Health England, 2015) often being influenced or mediated by the roles of those working in community development. Therefore community work and associated theoretical perspectives could be argued to inhabit the creative space between intentions and outcomes of policy (M. Shaw & Martin, 2000).

Therefore, the significant events that perpetuated familiar questions linked to societal progress, policy development and the role communities could play were of importance for the understanding of empowerment and resilience. These could include national questions over the appropriate capping of state welfare, funding of the NHS and policy towards home ownership following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower. Considerations could also have international implications through concerns over levels of immigration, membership of the European Union (EU), or security following terrorist attacks in the UK. Events provided the context to explore the extent to which that relationship between the citizen and state was empowering and supported ongoing resilience. This could also consider the causality within the relationship. For example, whether certain individuals might have sought out roles where resilience was needed, or whether it was the situations the roles presented themselves that had developed resilient characteristics (Lamb & Cogan, 2016).

#### 1.4.3 The State

The 'state' and the 'system' are often used interchangeably to describe government, the public sector or services delivered on their behalf. Whilst such definitions can be assumed and contested (Carnegie Trust, 2013), actions of state have implications for the wellbeing of the population and theorising how society does and perhaps ought to act could be argued to sit most clearly within the realm of Social Policy. Social Policy as an academic field of study has been described as concerned with the actions of promoting wellbeing, or the study of the 'big 5' areas that enhance the welfare of citizens, and that of the welfare state (Social Security, Housing, Education, Health and Social Work), (Alcock, Daly, & Griggs, 2014).

In the UK, the creation of the welfare state and the need for governments acting on behalf of the electorate to provide support for those most needy has been called the 'post war consensus'. Whilst there has been some discussion over whether consensus was ever a truly accurate description of the post war years (Alcock, Daly, & Griggs, 2014), budgets for health and education were often prioritised by all political parties, even in times of austerity.

Regardless of the perspectives of consensus, changes, turnover and arguable instability were also seen at a national government level. During the life-time of the

studentship there had been, at the time of writing, three different Secretaries of State for Communities and Local Government. This was not a new trend. Thirteen ministers had held the housing portfolio from 1995 - 2015, whereas only four had held this from 1945 - 1960 (Raynsford, 2016). Many ministers, it has also been argued had little previous experience or time to properly familiarise themselves with the issues and content in their brief (Raynsford, 2016). As of 2018 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) was renamed the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This was to reflect the "...government's renewed focus on housing issues" (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2018b).

The discussion of public sector structures, funding and reorganisation, procurements or the consequences of decisions made by politicians or their advisers was by no means new (Dunleavy, 1995), nor the underlying basis for political decisions impacting on the wider or social determinants of health and wellbeing (Baum, Laris, Fisher, Newman, & MacDougall, 2013). Therefore, these changes in personnel could also link to wider changes and turbulent events within local and national politics. Politicians could also tap into the popular discourse to create narratives around who was playing their part or pulling their weight in terms of societal progress (Hills, 2017), or in the case of the 'Brexit' referendum - who was in or out of a given community when considering issues of immigration or national sovereignty. Such events, discussions and reorganisations have been suggested as based on myths regarding the past and similar approaches to a 'broken' present (Jacobs & Manzi, 2013; McKee, 2015).

In recent years much debate has also considered the extent of neo-liberal theory on the activities of the state. Neo-liberalism, whilst defined in a variety of ways explored ideas of reductions in state intervention, bureaucracy and regulation, combined with a focus on individual responsibility and freedom to bring economic prosperity. This, it has been suggested signalled a shift away from centralised governance, moving power to the citizen, businesses, and communities (Moir & Leyshon, 2013). It has however been criticised for favouring the financial interests of business at the expense of others (Klein, 2007). Alongside this New Public

Management (NPM) although also subject to wide range of interpretation in terms of practices and outcomes, had been argued to have introduced managerialism and marketisation into state operations as the dominant practices (Bevir, Rhodes, & Weller, 2003). These practices and series of tools, for example financial, performance or personnel management and use of information technology are not necessarily new in themselves. However, it was arguably the mix of them that was, with any assessment of their efficacy dependant on the values of the assessor (Gruening, 2001).

Within this climate, social policy has been also argued to have become more interventionist (Deeming, 2013). In the UK, the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) originally part of the Cabinet Office, has advocated the increasing use of Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs), often considered the most robust and appropriate method for policy experiments (Deeming, 2013), and behavioural economics and psychological theories to 'nudge' individuals in specific directions.

#### 1.4.4 Wellbeing

'Wellbeing' in its own right has been argued as being a combination of ideas woven together from a diversity of academic disciplines, such as social policy, psychology and environmental studies (Bache & Reardon, 2013). Many frameworks have been created to explore the complex individual, societal, structural and subjective factors that were argued to influence wellbeing, yet the definition has not been consistently articulated (La Placa, McNaught, & Knight, 2013). As will be seen in later chapters when exploring the broader discourse, this concept was regularly linked to community development. For example, the 'What Works Centre for Wellbeing' in conjunction with Public Health England (PHE) and Happy City, completed a six-month project looking at the development of an indicator set to link with the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) Measuring National Wellbeing (MNW) programme. This work would provide an overview of communities, and "... meet the need for a practical local translation of that programme [the MNW], helping to inform local decision-makers so they could better understand the wellbeing of their constituents" (What Works Wellbeing & Happy City UK, 2017, p. 3). Whether or not wellbeing could be adequately measured, the question

remained being relevant for each of the key concepts as to their contribution to society and future progress. Therefore this had implications for the use of resulting information, both in terms of policy analysis and government decision making (Allin & Hand, 2017).

## 1.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the research aims, providing an initial summary of the key concepts. The concepts of community, empowerment and resilience were of primary interest in terms of the research aims. The state and wellbeing were of critical importance, providing a fundamental basis for understanding the nature of the relationship between local government and the desired outcomes for individuals and communities. The research aims were timely and relevant, given the challenges of austerity, stated intentions of MTC2, and current approaches within communities in England that were developing new networks of mutuality (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015).

From the Big Society of David Cameron, to the Shared Society of Theresa May, considerations of power, sovereignty and community tapped into ideas and attitudes towards present society and expectations for the future. This implied a shared understanding of the community or communities that citizens should be part of. This also shaped for example, the extent to which individuals or nations were defined or evaluated as empowered and resilient to deal with changes, often resulting from political agendas and policies. For all these efforts however, public attitudes to politicians and the political process remained the subject of contestation and controversy. The context for the research was one of complexity, change and contradiction, which will be further explored in the findings and discussion chapters.

Two approaches, analysing discourse and an interpretative phenomenological analysis of participant interviews were brought together to analyse the collective story and individual experience. These findings will be discussed to explore the understanding and implications over the use of concepts, along with the resulting

conclusions for their continued use and relevance. The overall structure of the thesis is outlined at Appendix 2.

The next chapter provides a wider exploration of key themes in a review of the relevant literature.

## Chapter 2 - Review of the literature

### 2.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 1, whilst spanning a variety of disciplines, the research was primarily focussed on the area of community development and its relationship with local government policy. This chapter therefore will review the main themes arising from the academic and grey literature, focussing on the conceptual understandings of community, resilience and empowerment as relevant to community development. Its location within the wider thesis is displayed at Appendix 2.

The qualitative research approach used both Discourse Analysis and IPA. The Discourse Analysis recognised the expert and official discourse represented by larger groups of individuals, institutions and media outlets (Hansen, 2006). Discourses could also assist in understanding the possibilities for action and their creation in terms of community development, rather than why certain actions were chosen (K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016). Therefore, uncovering and understanding what community development was or could be within the literature, would also have implications for the meanings of empowerment and resilience. Participants shared the experience of living during a period of austerity in Gloucestershire communities and an interpretative phenomenological approach was proposed to investigate the way this affected their views of the world (Gallagher, 2012).

The combined links with government and policy presented challenges and opportunities in the review. Community and community development were argued not only to inhabit the shifting boundaries between state and society (Mayo, Hoggett, & Miller, 2008), but also were characterised by their continual, contested nature. For example, in recent decades increasing academic and political interest had shifted towards a focus on 'what works' and value for money (Carpenter, Emejulu, & Taylor, 2016).

The literature therefore examined aspirations and actual outcomes of policy development and legislation. These considered the implications of decisions taken to address both structural and individual concerns, recognising the continuing significance of local government and localism within public policy discourse,

particularly in western liberal democracies (Ercan & Hendriks, 2013). In the UK this discourse was viewed as linked to government aspirations for increased public accountability, voices and responsibilities (Scambler, Scambler, & Speed, 2014).

The review offered an opportunity for the literature to illuminate the ways in which the political aspects of decision making and knowledge transfer were accounted for (Richardson, 2013). Some had argued approaches to politics and the policy making process should explore and attempt to “...recover the meaning of games, dramas and texts and to tease out their consequences” (Rhodes, 2013, pp. 481-482). This had parallels with Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’, where individuals and communities had certain ways of acting and feeling. These positions were dynamic, with struggles worked out on social ‘fields’, where the rules of the game and strategies were not necessarily explicit nor participants equally conscious of their influence (Hastings & Matthews, 2015; Mayo et al., 2008; Somerville, 2016).

Within corridors of power, officials, think-tanks and media had been described as “...opinion forming subcultures” (Jones, Pykett, & Whitehead, 2013, p. 37). Jones et al. explain these combinations of “...people, places, publications, organisations, events and happenstances” (2013, p. 37) contributed to the creation of ideas and discourses that gained common currency with academics and policy makers. However, even when dominant or common narratives, such as those of community self-help were articulated, the literature recognised this could only provide partial explanations, or even obscure important aspects. Such reflections continued long running historical debates, for example, in the perceived avoidance of complete discussions over inequalities and diversity within communities. The resulting position, was argued, could create a potentially naïve understanding of empowerment and relationships between the rich and poor (Berner & Phillips, 2005).

This context, combined with implied governmental desires for secrecy (Rhodes, 2013), and the existence of tacit knowledge made for challenges in the literature review. This reflected the possibility that individuals and organisations might “..know more than we can tell’ (Polanyi, 1966, cited in Gertler, 2003, p. 77), or even be unaware given the “...subtle and pervasive” nature of influences (Gertler, 2003,

p. 93). This coupled with an increasing academic and policy interest in the role of networks containing actors such as 'Inside Activists' (Olsson & Hysing, 2012), the reach of collaborative 'Boundary Spanners' (Williams, 2013), and the mediating role in policy implementation of 'Street Level Bureaucrats' (Lipsky, 2010) unearthed a complex, changing and often contradictory series of themes and debates.

This position was apparent at every stage, from contested concepts, policy inception and delivery through to participant perception and experience. Given the breadth of areas of influence, this affected the extent to which any issue could be explored in an appropriate depth. This remained a challenge throughout the life of the research in defining and delimiting the relevant literature.

There were three cross cutting debates that emerged and were developed throughout the literature review, each of which could be traced back over many decades, even generations. First, the nature of community development and related concepts, their role, definition and continuing relevance. Second, the extent to which factors influencing individual agency or structure were of importance. Third, the ways in which behaviours, interventions or initiatives were interpreted or evaluated. The discussions ultimately reflected on the nature of the relationship or collaboration between the state and communities. This chapter will consider these aspects, concluding with areas highlighted within the literature for future exploration.

## 2.2 Defining and understanding community

The use of community was widespread throughout the literature, in both academic and grey, employing a range of definitions implied or otherwise, from a seemingly endless range of perspectives. These were often consistent with earlier descriptions, which could often stretch back across many decades. There was therefore, a degree of continuity in the definitional appeals or judgements, linked to considerations of societal progress or wellbeing. These could encompass individual, local or national government rights and responsibilities and therefore potentially any aspect of daily life.

Community had been suggested to be operationally defined in three broad ways. First, as linked to locality or place, second by interest or identity and last by common condition or predicament (Wilmott, 1989, as cited in Popple, 2015). At the same time, communities could also span these definitions, with each aspect having multiple layers within each of the three operational definitions. For example, place or locality could represent both real and virtual settings, be world-wide, Europe or the EU, UK, Britain, England, County, City, Town, Neighbourhood, Street or Association.

As explored in the introduction, given the broad scope and use of community across disciplines and policy, the concept of boundaries and 'Boundary Spanning' was of relevance. Boundary Spanning was of importance, having been explored at an individual level in terms of participant characteristics, their collaborative endeavours within communities, bringing groups together and for information sharing (Long, Cunningham, & Braithwaite, 2013). This position also recognised the relevant literature in the review would not be consigned to one area or field of enquiry.

Historically, community had been considered when discussing changes in society, for example from the agricultural to industrial, or in terms of power relations and inequalities, structure, agency or the rise of networks and technology. For all this complexity though, there was a common thread or sense suggesting an optimum state was for people to be part of something bigger. This, often described as 'community', reflected previous discussions of involvement in activities beyond that of individual desires (Kingdom, 1992).

For example, Theresa May the current UK Prime Minister explained:

... the thing that shapes my approach – is that there is more to life than individualism and self-interest. We form families, communities, towns, cities, counties and nations. And we embrace the responsibilities those institutions imply. And government has a clear role to play to support this conception of society. (May, 2017a, p. 3)

Politicians, or their speech or policy writers therefore used community or related topics to incorporate, mix and combine ideas as part of their communicated relationship with the public. This could move beyond the national, for example seeking to build a “...global Britain...a more united country” (May, 2017a). Yet within the same speech by Theresa May, it was argued “...if you think you’re a citizen of the world, you’re a citizen of nowhere” (2017a). Whilst this could appear contradictory, complex and subject to change, such reflections were argued to offer perspectives on “...whether progress is being made , and if current progress is sustainable in the longer term” (Allin & Hand, 2017, p. 6).

Cohen (1985) noted in excess of 90 definitions for the concept of community as reported in the 1950s by American sociologist George Hillery. The common aspect in Hillery’s findings were that definitions linked to dealings with people. Cohen considered the symbolic nature of community, which viewed members’ understanding of the strength and meaning of community culture as important. Community was a relational idea and their identities were defined in part by boundaries of all types. Such boundaries and developments in wider society could create “...complementary opposition” (Cohen, 1985, p. 118) , with communities coexisting with the various societal changes, rather than being a thing of the past. The contrasts, or differences provided reference points for community identity and transformation.

Others however, reflected on whether community was in fact a thing of the past. This considered the extent to which community as a term had a constructive purpose at all, given its ambiguity and usage (Stacey, 1969, as cited in Blokland, 2017). Furthermore, it had been suggested that knowing when or if you were in or out of any given community was not without difficulty (Belton, 2017).

The challenge of definition was apparent in the Public Health England and NHS England report ‘A guide to community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing’:

‘Community’ as a term is used as shorthand for the relationships, bonds, identities and interests that join people together or give them a shared

stake in a place, service, culture or activity... this report uses the NICE definition of community as an umbrella term, to cover groups of people sharing a common characteristic or affinity, such as living in a neighbourhood, or being in a specific population group, or sharing a common faith or set of experiences. (2015)

Community therefore was a simplification or generalisation for a whole series of attributes, but also an umbrella term covering common characteristics. How to decide or define which or how many experiences constituted 'common' was open to interpretation. This lack of definition was not necessarily something to be criticised, as philosophers, such as Jean Luc-Nancy argued community "...cannot be presupposed. It is only exposed. This is undoubtedly not easy to think" (Nancy, 1991, p. xxxix).

That there was something to be 'found' in community, or some sense of what community was or could be experienced as had been defined within the literature as the Psychological Sense of Community (PSOC). This construct originally coined by Sarason in 1974 explored the feelings experienced by being part of a human system. Being part of the system was more than just membership and had been argued to include the importance of emotional connections, needs and influence (Mannarini, Rochira, & Talo, 2014; Omoto & Packard, 2016; Talò, Mannarini, & Rochira, 2014).

In addition, community had also been explored and analysed in terms of capabilities (Sen, 2005), networks and connections (Gilchrist, 2009; Rowson, Broome, & Jones, 2010; Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, 2015). This had also formed part of other approaches which understood the general wellbeing or health of communities in terms of the social capital within a given group or area (Putnam, 2000). Within such approaches, other writers had considered the nature rather than number of connections as being of importance as a lens through which to explore community (Wellman & Wortley,

1990). Therefore, such an analysis suggested it was not necessarily who you knew and their characteristics, but how you knew them (Giuffre, 2013).

Yet, community had also been defined and described simply as 'togetherness', however those links, bonds or connections might be interpreted (Somerville, 2016). Or to flip such analyses around, individuality was enhanced as people were made up of a series of communities or social circles (Simmel, 1971, as cited in Giuffre, 2013).

As a concept therefore, community could be all things to all people, with its ubiquity of use being part of the attraction. The blurring of many areas, for example social, geographical or administrative had been argued to make it harder to explore the complexities of how power systems work (Berner & Phillips, 2005). This status was of interest for community development research in order to explore the basis of realistic and achievable societal change.

#### 2.2.1 Communities and their development

As an area of work and study in the UK, community development had been argued to have had origins in the tension and contradictions arising between the development of the state and collective action within the British Empire (Pople, 2015). This had implications for the post-colonial era of the 20<sup>th</sup> century where many northern hemisphere countries were re-evaluating their own and others place in the world in the aftermath of the second world war. This led them, often in paternalistic ways, to reconsider or seek to improve the lives of others. Paternalism had been argued to be expected where institutions or organisations set out standard plans for an assumed majority (Sunstein & Thaler, 2003). However, the need for change could also be in response to recognition of social movements, for example, in terms of poverty, race or gender.

The foundation of community work and development had been suggested to support values that could conflict with established elites (Belton, 2017), or seek rights or concessions from the state (Emejulu, 2015) or even be considered as a therapeutic activity in its own right (Rodrigues, 2017). Therefore, much of the community development literature could be seen to concern two fundamental

aspects, both having implications for the nature of power relations. Firstly, the nature of society as it could be, or hopes for what it could be 'developed' into. Secondly, the considerations of justice and inequality that have influenced and created experiences in the here and now.

As with the exploration of participant identities in Chapter 7, the community development literature was complex, with definitions and conceptual understandings seemingly spanning various boundaries. However community development and related work had also been argued to occupy a specific space, bridging the gap between intentions and outcomes of policy (M. Shaw & Martin, 2000).

There were further challenges between the literature, both academic and grey as to the nature of society to be created. This would provide justifications for any given direction of travel or inquiry and the role communities were expected to play. Toomey had suggested that institutions, organisations and individuals all acted in the name of community development, which represented their own vision and provided a rationale for those actions, even if they did not develop communities (2011).

Given that the state had been argued to be "...everywhere and nowhere" (Jones et al., 2013, p. 35) and "...perhaps best seen as neither real nor fictitious, but 'as if real'..." (Hay, 2014b, p. 460), community development occupied an ambiguous and large, potentially symbolic space however defined.

The development of communal life, and considerations of how society could or should be were not new. The literature from a wide range of perspectives and disciplines noted individuals such as Alexis Charles Henri Clérel, Viscount de Tocqueville who wrote in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. His works explored the development of individualism, civic action and civil society during travels to America (Sennett, 2012; Winther, 2015). Sociologists such as Durkheim and Tonnies were also of significance, given that both explored the types of social ties that held society together in the midst of upheaval and change. Such considerations of individualism

and integration remained relevant with the UK government publishing a green paper on integrated communities in March 2018.

The Green Paper explained the rationale for integrated communities:

This is important because well-integrated communities are not just more harmonious places to live, but because the economic and social benefits – an extension of opportunity and prosperity, and lower levels of prejudice and hate crime – are enormous. (HM Government, 2018)

As is explored in more detail within Chapters 4 and 6 on Discourse Analysis, the economic benefits were regularly placed first or given prominence within government policy documents. This aligned with wider discussions and criticisms in the literature over the perceived acceptance of dominant neo-liberal agendas. These debates argued governments and the political classes or elites had protected their own economic interests despite apparent public disillusionment with their behaviour. Public attitudes such as these were important and were argued to reflect the extent to which there was faith in collective action as a realistic option (Jennings, Stoker, & Twyman, 2016). Faith also applied to perspectives of neo-liberal approaches that suggested a hope they could ultimately solve the various societal problems for wider benefit, rather than being inherently wrong in themselves (Konings, 2016).

Theresa May outlined the role and arguable primacy of the economic system:

...we will deliver this new agenda of social reform [the Shared Society]. And government will step up to support and – where necessary – enforce the responsibilities we have to each other as citizens, so that we respect the bonds and obligations that make our society work. This means government supporting free markets as the basis for our prosperity, but stepping in to repair them when they aren't working as they should. (May, 2017a)

Whether stepping in, up or out were best descriptions, the literature had long recognised the perception of society as operating in a communicated context of challenge or perpetual crisis (King, 1975, Moran, 2003, Runciman, 2013 as cited in Jennings et al., 2016). In response, central government was asked to change its approach, for example to increase funding and stabilise key services (Local Government Association, 2016). However, these crises, shocks and uncertainties were argued to enable continued political control whilst overseeing a rolling back of the state (Jennings et al., 2016; Klein, 2007; Newman, 2014). Such acceptance and dominance of ideas was a common theme within the literature.

Again, and perhaps regrettably, this understanding was not new; Loney, in his review of the British Community Development projects (CDP) had quoted Ralph Miliband from his book on the state and capitalist society. The book was originally published in 1969.

Miliband noted the dominance of the capitalist system, explaining:

The fact that Governments accept as beyond question the capitalist context in which they operate is of absolutely fundamental importance in shaping their attitudes, policies and actions in regard to the specific issues and problems with which they are confronted (1983)

Loney cited Miliband to also illustrate the context in which social scientists of the time operated, in terms of politics and policy research. However, addressing societal issues or problems within the UK had already reached a point of significance during 1940s. William Beveridge became immortalised as the architect of a series of reports forming the basis of the welfare state. Once again, the issues and concerns of the current literature were present in the past.

Beveridge wrote in his third report on mutual aid regarding the role of the voluntary sector:

... It was not putting first things first to rank an idle Saturday before decent homes for all...while old people struggle with discomforts beyond their

strength...while for many thousands of married pairs life in their own homes remains impossible...The making of a good society depends not on the state but on the citizens, acting individually or in free association with one another, acting on motives of various kinds, some selfish, others unselfish... (1948)

This had parallels with current concerns over ageing populations (Local Government Association, 2016), dreams of home ownership (May, 2017a) and the expectation that citizens rather than the state (Cameron, 2010) formed the basis of a good, big or shared society.

Within the academic literature the British CDPs of the 1960s and 1970s were an area of significant interest, being the last major community development project undertaken on a national scale (Belton, 2017). These projects had been argued as set in a context of government needing to distribute scarce resources, control public spending and avoid new costs arising from the projects' recommendations (Loney, 1983). The projects encountered many of the current challenges around community resilience, empowerment and pressures on statutory services. The CDPs' critique of the structural causes of poverty and government policy had been seen by various elements of the community development field as an example of both the failure and success of the programme (Scott, 2017).

Within the literature discussions continued over the extent to which attempts to address structural causes of deprivation through various community development-related initiatives had worked. Nuances of top-down versus bottom-up engagement, local leadership within neighbourhoods, organised groups in wards, districts and boroughs could create complexity and contradictory tensions. These in turn could result in social unrest as seen in UK riots (Dillon & Fanning, 2013), shifting material concerns onto the blame of specific people groups (Samad, 2013).

During the same period as the British CDPs, the American community organiser, Saul Alinsky noted in the early 1970s, challenges over the information age and the

threat caused by the perceived weak nature of politicians. Again, these also had many parallels with current debates and discussions.

Alinsky explored the environment as seen by the youth of the 1970s:

...Today's generation was desperately trying to make some sense out of their lives and out of the world...they have seen the almost unbelievable idiocy of our political leadership...we were living in a world of mass media which daily exposes society's innate hypocrisy, its contradictions...the young were inundated with a barrage of information and facts so overwhelming...which has them spinning in a frenzy... (Alinsky, 2010)

More recent approaches, such as Assets Based Community Development (ABCD) had looked at the strengths, knowledge and skills that could be mobilised in an area rather than a focus on deficits or needs (Foot & Hopkins, 2010; The Young Foundation, 2013). Whilst they could be seen to potentially privilege certain voices (Hopkins & Rippon, 2015), ABCD approaches had been suggested as a part response to confrontational tactics and solutions, such as those proposed by Saul Alinsky, viewed as outdated. ABCD for some writers asked useful questions if not necessarily providing appropriate answers, given its focus away from issues of the state and drift towards individual capacity and strengths (MacLeod & Emejulu, 2014).

Assets or strength-based approaches had roots and links with 'Salutogenic' theories based on the work of medical sociologist Aaron Antonovsky. Salutogenesis concerned the 'origins' of, or maintenance of good health in the face of adversity, rather than a focus on disease (Harrop, Addis, Elliott, & Williams, 2006; Public Health England, 2015). The maintenance of health and wellbeing were important, as local authorities had a number of statutory duties, and for example the Care Act 2014 placed a duty on them to promote the well-being of individuals.

Antonovsky's work explored the Sense of Coherence (SOC), a psycho social concept (Roy, Donaldson, Baker, & Kerr, 2014), questionnaire and scale that considered the

ways people made sense of the world and the resources around them, their actions and motivations (Harrop et al., 2006). SOC was one of a number of psychological concepts and theories of relevance, although beyond the full scope of this research. A brief discussion of other psychological theories is included in section 2.4.1. This section however, has highlighted the enduring struggles, opportunities and challenges facing the development of communities.

### 2.2.2 The role of community development work

As outlined by Emeluju (2015), the turn of the last century saw discourses for the development of communities converging around the oppositional tension between two themes. The first, 'Participation' was a means of the state and associated policies to transmit and instil values of the free market. These values and practices would empower and provide citizens with resilience to make choices about their lives. 'Transformation' sought to explore how community development practitioners and theorists responded to the encroachment of the free market into everyday life, seeking to "...subvert the dominant neoliberal approaches to community development, citizenship and the state" (Emejulu, 2015, p. 146).

Paulo Freire had discussed similar ideas, cautioning individuals in terms of accepting the dominant neoliberal discourse. This narrative he explained, put forth the argument that competent management had resulted in wealth creation being passed down to those less fortunate. Those with alternative views, for example those holding onto notions of a more radical form of social justice would be seen as blocking progress for those who were capable of creating the "...new history" (Freire, 2016, p. 136). Future development was assumed to come through the transmission of neutral, technical education and the large-scale training of workers. Freire argued that rather than being 'new', this was in fact part of the old discourse and therefore to be resisted.

Hills (2017) had argued that in recent decades there was a dominant, or popular presentation that the economic crisis of 2008 had placed financial pressures, such as higher taxation on one section of the population to support a dependent other. Changes to this situation needed to be made to reduce this dependence and improve the economic outlook. This presentation, he proposed used two simplistic,

yet broad public perceptions tapped into by politicians when considering welfare support and public spending (2017, p. 249). These however, were not fully borne out when analysed in more detail. Firstly, that those receiving benefits or support of some description were different to those who paid tax. These groups were sometimes described by the media as the 'them' and 'us', the 'skivers' and 'strivers', or 'workers' and 'shirkers'. Secondly the presentation and accompanying perception was that a large proportion of funding went to those who were out of work. This group were also perceived as liable for an unacceptable number of fraudulent claims. Hills argued, that actual fraud of Jobseekers Allowance, the UK benefit to support those out of work but looking for employment was potentially less than one thousandth of all spending on Social Security according to official analysis. However national surveys reflected much higher perceptions (2017, pp. 264-265) and therefore the media representations and public disquiet were likely to demand action from politicians.

There might be many reasons why simplification had been perceived as beneficial: Policy ideas need to be communicated widely (Ross, 2011), existing mechanisms and structures were too complex (Taylor-Gooby, 2013) or simplification might encourage certain behaviours (Thaler & Sunstein, 2003). This simplification also had relevance for community development as the 'them and us' could be translated as those 'in' and therefore by implication those 'out' of any given community. The resulting tensions and ambiguities due to such implied boundaries could influence how other groups were created, described or had expectations placed upon them. For example, the council and 'local' communities, the 'vulnerable' or not, those 'in need' of specific services to improve health and wellbeing or not. Each of these contrasts could potentially trigger demand for specific formal actions, for example planning, engagement, commissioning, monitoring, evaluating from national and local politicians, officers and members of the public.

However, as noted in section 2.2.1 it had been proposed in the context of economic considerations, that the key concepts had been used to promote a broader neoliberal agenda. These analyses were argued to inform the nature of threats or shocks to the system and justify responses within it. This had resulted in reduced

state intervention and the opening up of markets (Joseph, 2013). Based on shifting meanings, the focus had reflected individual agency, argued as detrimental to consideration of wider structural factors (Dagdeviren, Donoghue, & Promberger, 2016). Empowerment had been seen to be influenced in a similar way to resilience, with uses employed to shift understandings away from an outcome to a process. For example, governments could use language of the local, whilst retaining central control, or use ideas of citizen action to create new transformative spaces suggested as required (Bailey & Pill, 2015).

The literature also suggested that such actions and responses from government, or other sectors, might not reflect the personal or informal aspects of community life. Many activities had been argued to take place 'below the radar' which might be a result of geographical place, emotion or just luck (Phillimore, 2015). Lack of understanding or acknowledgement of these factors could contribute to a lack of trust or humanity (Carnegie Trust & Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016).

Yet questions of organisation within the societal structure, the balance of formal or informal was another key and historical debate within the literature. Jo Freeman, writing in the 1970s about the US Women's Liberation movement noted the challenges of structureless groups forming in response to a perceived system that was overly controlled. The lack of structure within groups was argued to mask power, which acted against the very principles these informal groups sought to oppose. She argued this was due to the various rules and decision-making approaches that were only known to a few, that many in the movement might not even be aware of.

Freeman explains that:

... to strive for a 'structureless' group is as useful and as deceptive, as to aim at an 'objective' news story, 'value-free' social science or a 'free' economy.

A 'laissez-faire' group is about as realistic as a 'laissez-faire' society; the idea becomes a smokescreen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others. (1972)

Freeman suggested that women's liberation had become an overused and well-known concept. Educational work was no longer needed to justify the need for change and that coordinated action was required. Freeman also outlined the vote or referendum, questionnaire or survey, alongside elections of spokespeople or the 'star system' (1972) as the three ways for establishing larger scale opinions. These three approaches remained of current significance in the development of the research design.

### 2.3 Empowerment and resilience

These concepts were identified as important for the research because empowerment was suggested to influence the control individuals and communities have over their lives, and resilience maintained well-being in times of difficulty (Public Health England, 2015). The concepts and their complexity of interaction offered opportunities for research and possible intervention for the benefit of marginalised communities (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). Such communities the literature noted however, were often on the receiving end of approaches rather than included in them (Chmutina et al., 2016).

The literature on empowerment and resilience also overlapped. The concepts were linked together as part of academic research into policy, for example in terms of the Big Society (Rowson et al., 2010). Reviews had shown the interplays between structural and psychological explanations (Spreitzer, 2008), yet it had been argued the concepts have not been explored in depth, particularly in the areas of community psychology (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). The popularity of both concepts had created therefore a lack of consensus of definition contributing to challenges over their operationalisation and application (Atkinson, Martin, & Rankin, 2009; Barr et al., 2015).

Brodsky & Cattaneo developed the Transconceptual Model of Empowerment and Resilience (TMER). This sought to capture "...the divergence, convergence, and interaction of these concepts at the level of both theory and action" (2013, p. 334). The model viewed the concepts as iterative, linked to individuals or communities as they became aware of a need for change. Risk was seen as a distinction between

the two concepts, given that risk was deemed to be always at hand with resilience, but that empowerment could occur even if risk was not present. Therefore, awareness of the presence or absence of risk was significant yet recognised as open to interpretation and perception. This need to manage the position between two types of state - of what was or could be - had parallels with community development, but also with that of liminality and thresholds discussed in section 2.5.1.

However, the TMER suggested resilience, defined as awareness, action, intention, reflection and maintenance were important to “...surviving and thriving” (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 340). These qualities were significant and could be seen as steps toward empowerment rather than complete realisation as the primary goal. Whilst aspects of empowerment might develop in the course of resilience, the TMER highlighted the need for clarity on the focus of change. Resilience was argued to be more linked to internal change and improvements to the status quo, whereas empowerment focussed on external, social changes. Understanding which process was underway was not straightforward given the blurring of usage. This created the potential for unrealistic goals, assessment of the resources required to bring change and limited insight into the impact of “...individual growth that was often a precursor to lasting system level change” (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 343). Therefore, although it was desirable to talk the language of empowerment or wider social change, through understanding resilience and smaller individual change “...success can also be found in each step taken along the way” (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 344).

Criticisms of this shift sought to explore the power relations behind the use of the concepts and meanings within policy making. This was important for community development as the usage of concepts could lead to a defence, or recovery of the status quo rather than transformation (Maythorne & Shaw, 2013).

### 2.3.1. Recovery

In the context of empowerment and resilience, that which could be recovered was an important consideration. Personal recovery had been primarily defined and understood in the context of mental health and clinical practice. This had been

linked to an open ended process signalling changes required in attitudes and values (Bonney & Stickley, 2008). This had relevance for the research given policy and practitioner aspirations to change community and individual behaviours, to support or encourage desired activity. Recovery therefore had been argued to overlap with the use of resilience (Boardman et al., 2010) and with the literature on wellbeing (Leamy, Bird, Le Boutillier, Williams, & Slade, 2011). Both therefore considered the extent of adaptation in response to a given set of circumstances, also something of interest to policy makers and commissioners of services.

Themes within the recovery literature had been argued to develop and merge two broad understandings. These were the clinical recovery from symptoms, 'recovery from', and a more general sense of overcoming difficulties. Such difficulties were coped with and a degree of control was held in order to function, even if medical symptoms remained. This was known as 'recovery in' (Stuart, Tansey, & Quayle, 2017). The academic literature had reflected its complexity and lack of definition (Leamy et al., 2011; Stickley & Wright, 2011a), with over 100 conceptualisations (M Slade et al., 2012). Reviews of the grey recovery literature had shown varying uses of the concept across personal, professional and policy domains (Stickley & Wright, 2011b). This lack of consensus had made it harder to be clear over who such approaches might be aimed at and how to evaluate their efficacy. Ultimately it was argued these were questions often decided by commissioners of services alone (Stuart et al., 2017).

Within the recovery literature the use of community in the sense of connectedness, or empowerment were more prominent, being thematic categories within the 'CHIME' framework. This framework had emerged from a systematic review (M Slade et al., 2012) outlining a series of recovery processes. CHIME stood for Connectedness, Hope and optimism about the future, Identity, Meaning in life and Empowerment. Resilience as used in the literature was less prominent, inferred or implied most often around discussions within the remaining categories of hope, identity and meaning. Alternative language to resilience was used such as 'rebuilding' positive identities (Tew et al., 2011), 'returning' to normality (Stuart et al., 2017), 're-establishing' a positive identity (Slade, Adams, & O'Hagan, 2012)

‘reconstruction’ of self (Bonney & Stickley, 2008), or ‘resist’ stigma or discrimination that affects identity (Tew et al., 2011). Therefore, whilst a wide range of recovery approaches existed, predominantly based on Western European and American models (M Slade et al., 2012), many had elements strongly associated with the core concepts of community, empowerment and resilience.

In their review of the evidence for social factors influencing mental health recovery, Tew et al. note three areas central to that understanding (2011). These were: 1) the sense of connectedness, personal and family relationships, 2) the degree of empowerment or control over life, and 3) the rebuilding of positive identities, resisting processes, stigma or discrimination that could devalue the individual. These clearly linked to the concepts of community, empowerment and resilience. This also had parallels with understandings of social capital, which whilst also subject to a range of understandings had grouped factors around networks, norms and trust (Putnam, 1995, cited in Onyx & Bullen, 2000). Again, each of these categories arguably influenced the development of community, empowerment and resilience.

Leamy et al. (2011) also proposed the wider influences of social factors on recovery, for example community integration, as important to properly understand its meaning. This sought to provide a fuller explanation, rather than a sole focus on the personal elements. Others, such as (Stuart et al., 2017) had also recognised the role that policy makers and communities could play. They highlighted the risk of only acknowledging the apparently successful in terms of recovery. This had the danger of creating a perception that all could achieve similar results with similar application, regardless of their circumstances. This could result in negative consequences, such as struggles to conform to the perception of an ideal, allocation of blame, or even disempower those which activities were seeking to support (Onken et al. 2007, Arenella, 2015, Rose, 2014, cited in Stuart et al., 2017).

Such perspectives had parallels with the concept of ‘candidacy’. Candidacy had its roots in the health literature exploring an individual’s perception that they might be a candidate or have multiple candidacies for a condition. In terms of community development this concept was important as explored why “...those in deprived

neighbourhoods tend to become, by contrast, 'silent'..." (Dasgupta & Wheeler, 1997, cited in Mackenzie, Conway, Hastings, Munro, & O'Donnell, 2013). This provided a potentially different lens through which to analyse the 'workers' or 'shirkers' as understood by Hills in section 2.2.2. Therefore, in terms of candidacy, interventions and services were the product of social construction (Mackenzie et al., 2013). This had significance given public sector resource constraints beyond that of the health sector and also linked to literature on 'Street Level Bureaucrats' who '...exercise discretion in moderating access to their particular services' (Mackenzie et al., 2013, p. 810). Candidacy also had parallels with the senses of self within the various psychological theories of self-discrepancy or regulation. These are explored further in section 2.4.1 and considered how identity or identification of self could influence behaviours and perception of need for services.

### 2.3.2 Community empowerment

Empowerment had been described as a "...meaningful shift in the experience of power attained through interaction in the social world" (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2015, p. 84). It was often considered to be a central concept supporting health, wellbeing and the achievement of social equity, being used across a wide variety of disciplines. However, it was argued as a complex construct, with many quantitative measures failing to address the community and organisational aspects (Cyril, Smith, & Renzaho, 2015). Community empowerment had also been described as also lacking clarity, being "...defined by implication or tacitly assumed to have an accepted definition" (Painter, Orton, Macleod, Dominelli, & Pande, 2011).

Chiapperino and Tengland (2016) argued that in the UK successive New Labour governments from 1997 - 2010 were part of a 'new wave' in the use of empowerment, to encourage an entrepreneurial and consumerist relationship between citizen and state. This they suggested could be seen within health planning and delivery, in terms of person-centred care rather than an exploration of potentially oppressive power structures. This approach marked a departure from earlier uses of 'radical' empowerment, linked to the emancipation theories of writers such as Paulo Freire. Freire focussed on social change and the development

of individual critical consciousness. The 'new wave' of empowerment was argued to link the concept to shifts in individual responsibility for health and wellbeing.

Regardless of definition, empowerment was described as a positive means to put individuals at the centre of their own decision making. Within the grey literature for example, community empowerment was often linked to control. This could include the extent of access and influence over local decision making (Cameron, 2010; Civil Exchange, 2015; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010) or more generally over the quality of life and health (Public Health England, 2015). However, at the same time it had been viewed as justifying an unnecessary shift from institutions seeking to divest or absolve themselves of their responsibilities (Chiapperino & Tengland, 2016).

In the context of context of community development, empowerment had also been argued at a wider level to consider the strategies for putting people at the centre of initiatives, offering sustainability, social justice and challenge over reform (Craig, 2002; Ledwith, 2009; Mayo & Craig, 1995). At a more local level empowerment had been argued to reflect communities having control and impact on policies affecting them through "...the creation of sustainable structures, processes, and mechanism" (Craig, 2002, as cited in Toomey, 2011). Such definitions reflected themes supporting the need for shifts from an individual to more organised forms of action (Laverack, 2006). However, empowerment, linked to collective ownership and understanding of the issues facing communities did potentially contrast with policy promoting self-management, personal rights and responsibilities. These approaches were arguably more positive, holistic and realistic, viewing empowerment as a potentially open-ended process, not necessarily shaped by the government agendas or neoliberalism (Bailey & Pill, 2015).

Empowerment and its importance for communities was also argued to link to transformative understandings of participation. Participation as with the key concepts was seen to offer a wide range of interpretations, being another example of a "...much used buzzword...An infinitely malleable concept" (Cornwall, 2008, p. 269).

### 2.3.3 Community resilience

Wider narratives had been recognised, drawing personal and community resilience together. These narratives have changed the emphasis and implied definition of resilience as a personal outcome by linking it to ideas of wellbeing, self-help and good citizenship, expected states of being, or desired processes (O'Donnell & Shaw, 2016).

Resilience had also been subject to a variety of definitions and applications. In more recent years it had been argued to apply in the UK to a response towards or 'bouncing back' from threats, natural or otherwise, ranging from terrorist attacks, viral outbreaks or flooding (Bulley, 2013). Exploration of experience within communities could help understand the impact of policies during a period of austerity, given much of the research in this area had been argued to focus at the regional and national level (Andres & Round, 2015). Definitions explored the maintenance of a healthy state in the face of adversity (Public Health England, 2015), coping with challenge (Carnegie Trust & Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016) or the avoidance of stress through sharing responsibilities (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, 2015).

In the context of community development, resilience was also noted as a ubiquitous concept applied across a variety of disciplines (Steiner et al., 2016). As with empowerment, systematic reviews had highlighted the disparity in the ways the term was used and operationalised, for example as a trait or as a process (Pangallo, Zibarras, Lewis, & Flaxman, 2015). Furthermore, the review also highlighted implications for future resilience research in terms of key definitions to assist with its application and measurement. These definitions included the 'core antecedents', described as adversity, and 'core consequences' which were defined as positive adaptation.

Resilience therefore had been argued to become increasingly attractive to policy makers and social theorists as reflects an ontological view of the world where complex relationships, networks and uncertainties abounded (Joseph, 2013). Although such complexity presented a challenge for definition, Chmutina et al. argued that most approaches assumed a resilient individual or system could

anticipate an event and its effects, transform or adapt (2016). They noted however that there were consequences of identifying specific attributes as present or desirable, particularly for vulnerable members of society.

They explain the implications for this development in understandings of resilience:

...resilience has moved from a term to a way of thinking, a paradigm that collects a number of concepts rather than a concept itself...It includes a range of components, from international aid and leadership to resistance and security, to sustainability and community well-being. This makes it impossible to decide whether a specific state is resilient or not, and to find out how a resilient state can be achieved. (2016)

Therefore, for each of the concepts their wide-ranging uses as described in the literature posed complex challenges for calculating, measuring or evaluating a current position or what could be achieved.

## 2.4 The evaluation or measurement of community, empowerment and resilience

As will be explored in Chapter 3 outlining the selection of approach for this research, these conceptual and definitional ambiguities within the literature presented challenges in terms of measuring or evaluating aspects of community or societal progress.

In England, Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) were formal local authority committees with membership covering CCGs and other partners created as a part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (HSCA 2012). HWBs were charged with delivering the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), a Health and Wellbeing Strategy and to promote health, wellbeing and integrated services for their local population (The King's Fund, 2013).

For local authorities the HSCA 2012 also saw Public Health functions moving across from the disbanded Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). As part of the new structures and functions, newly formed CCGs also saw a shared area of joint concern with local

authorities regarding the care of older or vulnerable groups through funding for the Better Care Fund (BCF), to be spent as required for local communities as measured by the JSNA (Somerville, 2016).

In the case of Gloucestershire, the JSNA included aspects such as population, deprivation, education and economic analyses to articulate an understanding of existing and future wellbeing needs and provided "...a common understanding of the county and communities" (Gloucestershire County Council, 2017, p. 1). The JSNA therefore was argued to outline the evidence and story for health and social care commissioning decisions made within any given geography (Local Government Association, 2011).

Debates within the literature however had considered the extent to which policy makers, government officials and researchers were willing to look 'Beyond GDP' as the most relevant measure of societal progress. In their review of evidence-based policy (EBP) research, Oliver et. al noted that little was understood about the policy process, the views and perceptions of actors involved in the decision making. This view suggested the need for phenomenological or interpretative approaches to fully explore the process (Oliver, Lorenc, & Innvær, 2014). The EU project 'Bringing Alternative Indicators Into Policy' (BRAINPOol) also recognised the existence of and need for strengthening the creative roles of individuals identified as 'indicator entrepreneurs' (Seaford & Berry, 2014). It was suggested that this role identified opportunities, collaboration and the creation of collective action between democratic representatives and statisticians. In some senses this would be similar to the functions of those working within community development.

These individuals were suggested as requiring the authority and motivation to do the job and needing the ability to deliver feasible rather than ideal outcomes. However, the grey literature reflected in practice that national organisations within the UK system such as the NHS were described as being in a 'catch 22'. Requirements for new initiatives or plans, demands on services mean existing or available data collections were used. However it was recognised that "...new ways of working with their communities and new cultures of care (engagement and empowerment) will require new frameworks and measures..." (Realising the value

consortium, 2016a, p. 12). The solution proposed was to develop measures over the next 3-5 years. 'Beyond GDP' approaches had looked at areas such as subjective wellbeing and were suggested as required to complement and not replace such economic considerations. However, regardless of these developments, economics had been argued as the predominant lens through which progress was still viewed (Allin & Hand, 2017).

For example, the 2016 EU referendum in the UK showed how financial and economic information took prominence and was used to generate evidence for each side of the debate. The cited £350m per week sent to Brussels and argued to be better spent on the NHS instead by the vote leave campaign became an item of contention and influence. Whilst disputed and widely reported as a misuse of statistics by the head of the UK Statistics Authority (Kentish, 2017), this statement took on a life and use beyond the original campaign.

For example, more than a year after the referendum vote, Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of the NHS England used a key conference speech to provider organisations arguing that the public wanted the increased money rather than continued criticism of the original claim. The speech also linked the NHS to the development of wider society explaining "... a modern NHS was itself part of the practical answer to the deep social concerns that gave rise to Brexit" (Agerholm, 2017).

The referendum also entered the wider discourse from UK government in the Theresa May's view of the Shared Society:

It is clear to me – and I believe that last year's vote to leave the European Union partially revealed this to be true – that there are growing numbers of people in every part of our country – in our cities, suburbs, towns, countryside and coastal areas – for whom this [job insecurity, cost of living, low wages, lack of involvement in decisions] is the reality of life. (May, 2017a)

Theresa May had subsequently referred to these themes in the forward of a UK government Green Paper on Integrated Communities to a “...a country that works for everyone, not just a privileged few” (2018). This restated the same language used in the Shared Society speeches.

The Green Paper also developed the idea and influence of the EU referendum in regard to resident communities and migrants:

This is especially important as we leave the European Union and seize the opportunity to create the kind of country we want to be: a global, outward-looking, connected nation, at ease with itself and others, built on the backbone of strong, integrated communities. (HM Government, 2018)

The Green Paper offered over 30 broadly constructed policy proposals, following similar aspects of structure to those of the Big Society announcement. The consultation asked for agreement that integrated communities were defined as people that “...live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities” (HM Government, 2018, p. 16). As with the PHE definition for community, it was broad in scope and unlikely to be the subject of disagreement. This reflected previous considerations what could be meaningfully measured in terms of community (Chanan, 2003).

Ambiguous operational definitions however were useful for policy makers to avoid direct challenge or criticism, appealing to common sense ideas, using apparently unquestionable statements. However even if unclear, these definitions could provide insight into the means by which the state, other formal organisations or individuals might align themselves with, or sought to engage with communities. The types of links, connections and their impact on communities reflected the importance of debates in the literature around the roles of structure or agency in the development of community.

As explained by the UK Prime Minister of the Coalition Government, David Cameron:

...this Government is committed to practical action that strengthens the hand of those communities who want to help themselves. They are the ones with the energy, creativity and insight needed to tackle the problems they experience. (2011b)

Therefore, the nature of the relationship within much of the grey literature reviewed was based on problem solving. The government would engage and support those communities who wanted to help themselves, which also offered an opinion on the type of characteristics they should exhibit and that which would ultimately be measured.

The challenges or problems for areas in the Integrated Communities green paper, previously described as “...dull, soulless clones” (Cameron, 2010) were now about diversity and difference. These areas were becoming segregated and divided, being affected by hate crime and extremism. To support the aims of the policy proposals, the access to finance, in this case a new innovation fund rather than a Big Society Bank was proposed. The policies would focus on specific ‘opportunity’ and ‘integration’ areas, rather than ‘vanguard’ communities, with the community organisers or leaders outside of politics as noted in the Big Society narrative now called ‘Changemakers’. Changemakers was not a new description however, having been used to explain key roles in building connections (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, 2015) or citizen participation amongst young people (Carnegie Trust, 2016). Changemakers were identified as individuals not in positions of authority and who might not even recognise themselves as leaders yet needed a voice. Lastly as with the Big Society, the commitment to sharing data, the power of information to see replication and wider roll out remained. The green paper however went further in noting the creation of a local and national set of integration measures. On a practical level, concerns within the academic and grey literature often reflected the usefulness of the numerous models or indicator sets in existence. Efforts to measure could duplicate

or replicate previous approaches and create as noted by What Works Wellbeing and Happy City UK, as “...just another indicator set” (2017, p. 5). However identifying cause and effect or a ‘true’ picture of reality was complex and challenging when considering social behaviour and events (Hood, 2016). Whether the academic research agenda would track and follow these developments as with previous cycles was to be seen.

The clarity of definition was complicated further by the consideration of whether the descriptions of community related to the community itself or the attributes of a given group. Additional factors included place or outcome expected as the result of the intervention. In some senses this recognised the importance of considering of concepts as they were, but also as they perhaps should be (Toomey, 2011). The nature of the definition was important for all concepts, as this linked to how researchers might measure or evaluate. The UK government appointed Baroness Newlove to the role of Government Champion for Active Safer Communities in 2010 with a “mission to help change communities” (Newlove, 2011a, p. 3). A series of three reports were published, one of which will be considered within the Discourse Analysis. These reports did not define what community was, but described them in a variety of ways, for example stating that the “...Big Society has existed for years and years without a label” (Newlove, 2011b, p. 3). This position was not unduly surprising in that community sector research was argued to often focus on the structure, or organisation rather than the activities themselves (McCabe, Phillimore, & Mayblin, 2010). Such a focus did not fully factor in the interpretations of the individual, which might create unrealistic or idealistic goals in terms of definition, reducing the meaning of concepts (Lenette & Ingamells, 2015).

2.4.1 The evaluation or measurement of individual traits or process  
Alongside considerations of structure, the literature also considered the traits, processes and outcomes for individuals and groups. Understanding behaviours and motivations were of interest and would manifest within the grey literature predominantly around the area of behavioural change. This approach was seen as a way to influence fulfilling lives, management of health and create meaningful interactions (Realising the Value Consortium, 2016b). The approach also reflected

the need to explore desired characteristics or the environments in which such characteristics could be created.

Within the UK government the Behavioural Insight Team (BIT) was originally created as a unit within the Cabinet Office. The BIT developed the 'EAST' framework, which had been subsequently applied to person and community centred approaches or 'nudges' to health and wellbeing that were 'Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely' (Realising the Value Consortium, 2016b). 'Nudging' recognised the potential irrationality of decision making, rather than assuming the best rational decision would be made given the information to hand. Instead, this explored how individuals might select and ascribe importance to information (Moseley & Stoker, 2013). Behavioural theories linked in part to political theory concerning the role of the state. This for example explored paternalism and the extent to which organisations could or should act to steer or limit choices of others. Issues of paternalism were of relevance for public sector organisations, as they often need to set out plans or options (Sunstein & Thaler, 2003) such as those seen locally within Gloucestershire as part of the MTC2 strategy and consultation. These plans could be utilised to steer the public debate on future service provision.

Other frameworks of relevance concerning motivations and behaviours included the Volunteer Process Model (VPM). The VPM was a framework exploring the complexity of activism and volunteer engagement. The authors used the model to analyse the 'antecedents', covering personality and motivations, 'experiences' in terms of the relationships that developed and 'consequences' in terms of the impacts of volunteering and likelihoods for continuation. The model also recognised volunteering as a phenomenon that cut across the individual, interpersonal, organisational and societal levels (Omoto, Snyder, & Hackett, 2010).

Understanding behaviour opened up a wide range of considerations within the literature. Whilst this provided a wide array of descriptions for creative, spanning, entrepreneurial or activist individuals, exploring behaviour and motivations, beyond nudges were not without challenge.

As explained by Lowndes and McCaughie:

There is a tendency for academics and practitioners alike to feel embarrassed when confronted with the truism that personality and passion and individual qualities matter. Our research shows that how agents think is as important as what they think, in addressing current [austerity] challenges. (2013)

This had associations with social psychology, itself linked to the disciplines of psychology, sociology and anthropology. Social psychology concerned how thoughts, feelings, attitudes and human behaviours were influenced by others (Hogg & Vaughan, 2008). Whilst considering behavioural science in terms of individual decision making was of relevance, there were a much wider range of psychological theories discussed in the literature. Each had potential implications for the development of communities and the individuals within them in terms of identity, self-perception and outcomes. Exploring this in the context of community development could form part of future lines of inquiry.

For example, social identity theories considered the differences between individual and group identities, loyalties and relations (Hogg & Vaughan, 2008; Moseley & Stoker, 2013). These categorisations or identities were argued to influence expected patterns of behaviour and membership within a given group. Social representations explored the understandings shared between groups, with self-regulation and discrepancy theories considering the way in which we were argued to perceive ourselves, in terms of 'actual', 'ideal' or 'ought' selves (Higgins, 1987). These explored the emotions and tensions that arose as we sought to resolve the differences between them. Self-Determination considered how types of motivation could be encouraged or discouraged, with regards to feelings of competence and links to others (Deci & Ryan, 2012), with social exchange theory looking at how interactions between people affected what they were willing to give and receive. This for example, could cover perceptions of rewards, costs and contexts (Hogg & Vaughan, 2008).

Although much of the literature identified was beyond the scope of this research, these theoretical considerations had potential use to provide clarity or insight into empowered or resilient behaviours or characteristics. Not least as to why or when they might be required, or when other behaviours might undermine them. For example Charity Boards had been asked to “...undertake greater self-reflection, examining their behaviours, processes and skills” (House of Lords, 2017c, p. 3). Within the grey and academic literature various reports and reviews inferred the power of individual and group behaviours, loyalties and interactions. These explored the nature of relationships between policy makers and commissioners, professional and academic reviewers. Two examples follow to illustrate the discussion of decision making, interactions and behaviours at the highest level. These also illuminated the challenges of providing evidence and taking action. The examples reflect on the way in which decisions could influence the existence and delivery of specific services at a local level.

#### 2.4.2 The Iraq inquiry

The Iraq Inquiry chaired by Sir John Chilcot released its report in July 2016. The inquiry ran from 2009 to 2016, with an estimated total cost of approximately £13 million pounds (The Iraq Inquiry, 2016). The report itself held 130 evidence sessions from 150 witnesses, 150,000 government documents and over 1,500 individual submissions were received and reviewed. Yet for all this analysis similar and quite straightforward questions remained over the extent of power relations and beliefs (Thomas, 2017), and the perceived wishful thinking applied to evidence used as the basis of decision making (Porter, 2016). Alongside these considerations, Chilcot’s evidence noted the lack of challenge from those within the decision-making process, the behaviours of individuals and groups. This explored the power of history and seemingly unrelated events in terms of the decisions at hand. For example, the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, had achieved past successes in saving the Labour Party and the subsequent election success were of importance attributed and associated with him as a personality. This had created a degree of “...personal and political dominance that was itself overriding, if you like, the doctrine of collective Cabinet responsibility...just sheer psychological dominance”

(House of Commons Liason Committee 2016, p. 15). These considerations were of interest in exploring how groups operated within government, and developed policies to support communities across the country.

#### 2.4.3 Kids company

The case of the Kids Company (KC) illustrated how over £40m of UK central government money was allocated during 1996-2015 on one charitable organisation. KC provided support to vulnerable and young children, mainly in London and Bristol communities. As part of the inquiry it was noted that the charity's requests for money referenced the Big Society narrative, something that the media KC argued were seeking to criticise and attack (Loughton, 2015).

The period of KCs operation covered Conservative, Labour and Coalition governments with the charity filing for insolvency in August 2015. The report into the collapse noted that until 2013 the government mainly relied on KC's own self assessments of performance, of outputs rather than outcomes offering limited evidence to support their work (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, 2016). The report noted that KC operated in a climate "...of favour [within Whitehall and specifically no.10]". Tim Loughton, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Children and Families in the Department for Education 2010–2012 described KCs Chief Executive as "... almost the poster girl for the Big Society summit" held by the Prime Minister after the 2010 election (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, 2016, p. 38). In 2013 the Department for Education (DfE) awarded a £200,000 contract to monitor and evaluate the grant funding of the demand led model operated by KC. The evaluation reviewed whether KC reporting spreadsheets had accurate data transposition, totals and averages, and tallied with DfE grant funding. However, the scope did not include looking at the quality of the charity's services (National Audit National Audit Office, 2015). In addition the report noted "...we observed a recurring pattern of behaviour each time KC approached the end of a grant term" (National Audit Office, 2015, p. 6).

The DfE rationale in 2013 for the continuing commissioning of funding KC following the evaluation included: precedent, quality and reputational damage to the

government's wider agenda if funding was withdrawn. There was no assessment included of value for money, or opportunity cost of not continuing. During the period from 2011 – 2015, three separate professional firms were involved: as auditors, Kingston Smith LLP, to review finance and governance controls, PKF Littlejohn – directed by the Cabinet Office and to investigate financial irregularities PricewaterhouseCoopers – engaged by KC on the direction of the Charity Commission. However, an academic review by the London School of Economics of the KC model during this period noted KCs effectiveness. It noted this "...lies on a combination of factors that include the evidence based, theoretical foundations of its model... Kids Company requires support from society and from the state to continue developing the excellence of its overall model of work" (Jovchelovitch, 2013, pp. 59,60).

Despite the various reviews, it was argued that resulting documentation on KC might have "...obscured more than they may have revealed to those who read them" (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, 2016, p. 31). In addition, a skilled and experienced board of trustees were in place, although arguably swayed by dominant personalities which "...suspended their usual critical faculties" (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, 2016, p. 53).

This example could be argued to show how behaviours could be shaped, situations and evidence interpreted by influential relationships in Whitehall. This created the environment for recurring patterns observed and decisions made to request and release funding. For the officials concerned whilst good work was perceived to be undertaken by KC, to justify the sums of money involved "...we never really had the evidence to back that up" (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, 2016, p. 41).

Therefore the grey literature could be seen to reflect the nature of the state as proposed by Hay, in that there were a series of disseminated tendencies and counter tendencies (2014b). These evaluations by bodies commissioned by, or part of the state architecture, such as Select Committees, the National Audit Office or specific inquiries reflected or reported what didn't work at the same as the state promoted similar ideas or policies that suggested they did.

## 2.5 The role and relationship between the state, communities and wellbeing

Historically, the literature recognised development of the state and welfare in the UK was often built upon existing voluntary or charitable activities, traditions and institutions. Such traditions and institutions reflected the shared needs of citizens and communities as part of a perceived national social contract (Taylor-Gooby, 2013). The principles of the welfare state's creation were founded on the provision of universal health care, child allowances and the aim of full employment to pay for such provision (Timmins, 2001). Over time therefore the state had a more visible role and expectation to have a connection into the lives of its citizens.

In recent decades the trend of increased state ownership, involvement or the expected resourcing functions had been reversed. For example, the public sector had been seen to change through periods of reorganisation, restructure, privatisation, PFI and outsourcing. These changes had been underpinned through the adoption of New Public Management (NPM). NPM had been argued to reflect a significant influence in the way successive governments have sought to improve the effectiveness of the state (Bevir, 2008). This had been promoted through a more direct management of the public sector. This had brought with it an introduction of performance measures, often quantitative and various private sector practices such as competition and contracting out. Supporters had viewed this as a means to reshape and improve performance of government and the state, and by implication the lives of the people it serves. Some criticised this approach, arguing that the transactional, commodified approach resulting from industrialisation was the problem itself (Pell & Seddon, 2012). Pell & Seddon suggested focussing on the whole system and flow, rather than an ever cheaper basic unit cost and increased scale as the way forward.

Alongside this setting, it had also been argued that a process of 'depoliticisation' was underway, where tasks and their agendas were removed from everyday politics through a range of methods including contracts and laws, signalling the actions required or transfers of power to expert groups (Roberts, 2011). This process had been seen to continue in the wake the 2008 financial crisis and "...reaffirm and

further consolidate a 'logic of discipline' over a logic of public accountability or democratic choice" (Roberts, 2011 as cited in Hay, 2014a). In some ways this could be seen as a contracting out of the democratic process.

However, despite nearly 20 years of privatisation and decentralisation, by 2007 the UK government had recruited an additional 500,000 public servants (Jenkins, 2007). Following the EU referendum it had been reported that the Brexit Secretary, David Davis had estimated an additional 8000 civil servants would have been recruited (Watts, 2017). Defining what was in or out of the state therefore, at a given point in time was not without challenge. This complexity reflected contested themes in the literature concerning the role and purpose of the state (Hay, 2014b) and that of community work itself (Popple, 2015).

However, it had been argued that paradoxically, the scope of powers shifted under the banner of devolution and the mechanisms to access them, meant that national government could retain and command a great level of local and regional control. This was facilitated for example by the use of referenda (Willett & Giovannini, 2014). Theorising over these concepts and ideas were seen as having implications for an ontology of the state that "...renders the world governable in certain ways" (Joseph, 2013, p. 41).

#### 2.5.1 The assumed efficacy of collaboration between the state, communities and wellbeing

Collaboration and integration had been used by policy makers as a means to assist governments, both national and local in organising its resources (Dickinson, Glasby, Nicholds, & Sullivan, 2013). Integration had continued significance for community life (HM Government, 2018) and in terms of sustainable service delivery for the NHS and Social Care (House of Lords, 2017a).

Within the NHS Constitution, patients had the right to be involved in the planning of healthcare services commissioned by NHS bodies (NHS England, 2015). Local authorities, the NHS and other partners had operated therefore in a seemingly collaborative environment of place based, partnership working. This had an expected outcome of integrated or joint commissioning (House of Lords, 2017a). These concepts had many parallels with community in the bringing together of

individuals, groups, organisations or networks to share resources, ideas and practices. This inferred benefits, although which decisions could be actually participated in, influenced, and by which members of the community could often be unclear (Cornwall, 2008).

The Gloucestershire Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) plan argued:

...we believe that by all working together in a joined up way as 'One Gloucestershire', there is an opportunity to build stronger, healthier and happier communities and transform the quality of care and support we provide to all local people. (Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016)

However, there was evidence within the academic literature to suggest that these benefits were not always realised (Dickinson & Sullivan, 2014; S. Mackie & Darvill, 2016). Dickinson and Sullivan noted the range of large-scale studies that highlighted regular difficulties in generating evidence to support collaboration as an approach. Its popularity remained, even in the midst of criticisms of methods employed to generate evidence or views of its likelihood "...to fail in a public policy system that remains silo-based." (Powell, 2007, cited in Dickinson & Sullivan, 2014). Evidence for links between public policy collaboration and improved service user outcomes were noted as limited, not least in part due to defining collaboration itself (Dickinson et al., 2013). Within the grey literature similar concerns had been raised by the National Audit Office.

They noted that the DH, and DCLG had not:

...established a robust evidence base to show that integration leads to better outcomes for patients...tested integration at scale and are unable to show whether any success is both sustainable and attributable to integration. (2017)

Within Gloucestershire this collaborative approach was undertaken through organisations coming together, for example to support devolution proposals submitted in 2015 as 'We are Gloucestershire', create an STP across Health and Social Care as 'One Gloucestershire', as well the recently launched 'Gloucestershire 2050 Vision' project in 2017. All initiatives sought to improve the experience or future of Gloucestershire communities in some shape or form, although were created in addition to current structures and organisations. This further reflected the increasingly complexity of the system within which communities existed.

This could highlight how collaboration was interpreted and communicated in a variety of ways. For example as a tokenistic exercise seeking to delay critical consciousness (Freire, 1996), a neo-liberal opportunity to enhance efficiencies in the face of funding cuts (Clayton, Donovan, & Merchant, 2015), or simply a pluralistic reality in devolving service responsibilities to others (Newman, 2011). Dickinson and Sullivan suggested that collaboration had an enduring appeal, high expectations and usage given that "... It is a symbolically important concept that is capable of giving something to individuals and organizations as a resource in their process of going about their everyday work" (2013, p. 177). Therefore, even if problematic to define and in the absence of knowing 'what works', it had a value in maintaining day to day activity. Community was also hard to define and specify what worked, being both problematised and operationalised at the same time (Zebrowski & Sage, 2017). Zebrowski & Sage also discuss the writings of Jean Luc-Nancy who argued an original sense of community never existed. Rather, that community was understood in the day to day, through "...what happens in the questioning, waiting, event, imperative – in the wake of society" (Nancy, 1991, cited in Zebrowski & Sage, 2017). For Zebrowski & Sage they interpreted actions related to community inspired by the absence of that which was continually understood as unlikely to be fulfilled.

Dickinson et al. suggest that whilst the areas of efficiency and effectiveness have been considered within the literature with regard to collaboration, 'efficacy' was an area that had yet to be explored in detail (2014). They explored efficacy as concerns with the cultural performance of an organisation as represented by language,

symbols and objects, emotions, practices and identity. Their framework for exploring this considered amongst various factors: 1) the discourses that were present, 2) metaphors and symbols and 3) ways in which actors performed a collaborative self. The sense of a collaborative, perhaps corporate or group self had links with the psychological theories concerning self-discrepancy and regulation noted in 2.4.1. The collaborative self for example could be a manifestation of the 'ought' self.

These considerations also had links with the concept of 'liminality', derived from the Latin word for threshold. This concept was developed by the French anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep in 1909 and further developed by other writers such as Victor Turner who saw liminality as an intermediate period (Meira, 2014). Van Gennep proposed three phases, of separation, transition and incorporation. The phases reflected rites of passage that moved from a previous way of life to a new one, with the transition phase being the 'liminal' (Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003). The liminal phase was ambiguous yet offered opportunities, with liminal groups appearing during periods of crisis with liminality being "...that which is neither this nor that, and yet both" (Turner, 1967, cited in Meira, 2014). Descriptions and uses of liminality in the literature ranged from serious illness (Little et. al, 1998, cited in Greenhalgh et al., 2013), through to actors working in the intersection of local government and the private sector (Nicholson & Orr, 2016). These therefore, have been argued to inhabit a liminal space between healthy and unhealthy lives, or policy and implementation. Research into boundary spanning had also considered the extent to which liminal actors could step outside of the current environment to create safe or third spaces where new practices were possible (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011, cited in Quick & Feldman, 2014). This had parallels with research that had suggested the practice of management consulting as liminal space for both consultants and the organisations they work with (Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003).

## 2.6 Chapter summary

The literature review has outlined the challenges of definition and usage of the main concepts. Community, empowerment and resilience had been employed in the global context of goals for economic prosperity, personal freedoms, rights and

responsibilities. Within the UK, this manifested itself as a governmental agenda to decentralise, localise and create 'Big' or 'Shared' Societies. Whilst the Big Society had been argued to fail against its original agenda (Civil Exchange, 2015), the notion of communities playing a part in policies or solutions developed by government remained.

Added to this, the nature of the state and the relationship with communities was complex. The area of 'pre-decision making' in terms of why particular ideas took root with policy makers had been suggested to require further research within the public policy literature (Bache & Reardon, 2013). Actors from policy to street level all had a potential to influence what was known, and how that was communicated and interpreted. Working "...in and against the state" (Carpenter et al., 2016, p. 6) was a persistent question, and of continuing relevance for those engaged in community development.

Many of the debates over the nature of society, the types of communities that existed and actions that could or should be taken in terms of their development were not new. They reflected a series of struggles and questions of reform highlighted by thinkers such as Freire and Alinsky, or by initiatives such as the British CDPs. These had relevance not just for those living in the communities they associated with or causes they might champion, but for those seeking to understand power relations and social justice.

Proposals to reform or change practice, to support or fund alternative projects in the climate of austerity could be seen therefore as naïve (Lenette & Ingamells, 2015) not helped by high profile cases such as Kids Company where organisational governance was seen to have "...relied upon wishful thinking and false optimism..." (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, 2016, p. 50)

Whilst it could be seen that questions of power and justice only gained attention following significant events, for example the financial crisis, critical regulatory reports, major elections or referenda or national tragedies, there was a common approach to use the concepts across a range of contexts. This was argued as useful to support proposals or ideas due to their universal appeal or common-sense

understandings. These were buzzwords or fuzzwords (Cornwall & Brock, 2005; O'Donnell & Shaw, 2016; Toomey, 2011) that could not be questioned.

The recent UK context as explained by Theresa May, outlined her mission for government "... to make Britain a country that works for everyone and not just the privileged few...fighting these obvious injustices...acknowledging and addressing the everyday injustices that too many people feel too" (May, 2017a). However, for those seeking to find 'what works', in terms of structural factors, characteristics or traits, to look 'beyond' GDP, the position therefore was also ambiguous and contested. Even in the midst of large-scale EU projects and multiple national initiatives to explore this over the last decade, similar questions over the usefulness of the available evidence emerged. Most recently this was explained in terms of UK community integration evidence as being variable with gaps. The lack of suitable data was in part due to the legacy of different definitions and frameworks not collected at a local level or updated frequently enough (HM Government, 2018).

The continuing cycle of policy ideas, problems and solutions had a series of possible explanations within the literature. Firstly, that the concepts and understanding were ill defined (Cornwall, 2008; House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, 2011; Mayo et al., 2013), which could be seen as a means to obscure or avoid challenge (Clarke & Cochrane, 2013). There might be tacit knowledge which could help provide better definitions or understanding but could not be shared (Gertler, 2003; Rhodes, 2013). It could also have reflected a genuine need to simplify and quickly explain concepts that by their very nature were hard to fully understand (Belton, 2017; Hay, 2014b; Richardson, 2013). Such concepts therefore, took time to consider, due to their complex, contradictory and changing natures. This struggle could also reflect a transitional or liminal state between what was and what could be (Meira, 2014), with resilience and empowerment perhaps offering support to live with this tension. Therefore, there was a logic for them to be employed and suggest an element of hope (Freire, 2016).

In terms of empowerment and resilience, the concepts were regularly used within grey literature to focus on the positive characteristics or outcomes. These aspects were argued as needed to be utilised and then developed in order to transform

society. They were desirable and if incorporated into existing services and structures would deliver results. However, the academic literature had cautioned over the lack of attention given to their interaction (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). This had suggested that the interplay was not necessarily linear. This overly simplistic use of concepts ran the risk of creating unrealistic expectations or misunderstanding of events, causes and effects.

Solutions in the grey literature had proposed collaboration or integration, delivering at scale at an individual or service level would deliver the required benefits. Whilst community, empowerment and resilience had relevance to this idea, a consistent theme across the literature had demonstrated a more complex picture, with mixed evidence for its efficacy. At an individual level, the shift towards responsibilities and rights also assumed an overly simplistic view of the person. Behavioural change or 'nudging' had gained prominence and sought to explain and explore the extent of rationality in decision making, that small changes could have big effects (Jones et al., 2013; Stoker & Moseley, 2010). However, the depth and breadth of psychological theoretical considerations, for example in terms of self identity, perceptions or candidacy or motivations for pro-social behaviour such as volunteering were less prominent. This was the case within both the grey and academic literatures concerning community development.

The prominence of the 'EAST' framework and influence of the BIT could perhaps of reflected policy and governmental needs for easy, accesible, social and timely solutions to the problems that face communitities - as much the potential benefits the approach could bring. However, the academic literature would argue that community development and the key concepts were not easy to grip, theoretically or operationally. Therefore, whether the position in terms of policy down to individual nudge was accessible and timely, to what end and for whom within communities could be contested. That said, the events and "...happenstances" (Jones et al., 2013, p. 37) in developing policy, coupled with the "...luck, and chance..." in creating social action (Phillimore, 2015, p. 22) might be usefully nudged, if employed at the right groups at the right time, rather than a blanket

approach aimed at communities. This could perhaps improve the 'health' of government policy and delivery.

The consideration of alternatives as possible drew parallels within the literature on recovery. This concept was also contested, but linked to empowerment, resilience and community in the various models. Whilst much of the literature reviewed concerned the extent of economic primacy and potential for transformation, there were regular reflections which covered themes relevant to recovery. Such reflections perhaps offered an alternative lens to view the challenge of community development. These included the transparency of goals, rethinking approaches to control, listening, understanding what we want may not be possible or the recognition of inconsistent progress.

Ultimately debates as to whether '...there is an alternative' and that 'another world is possible' (Carpenter et al., 2016, p. 3) were likely to remain a vigorous area of inquiry, not least in terms of how that might be recovered and by whom. The following chapters will now outline how the issues and themes within the literature were considered, in the development of the research aims and multiple qualitative approaches.

## Chapter 3 - Methodology and Design

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will build on the themes highlighted in the introduction and review of the literature. Its location within the wider thesis is displayed at Appendix 3. The chapter will then outline the context for considerations and decisions made over: the development of research aims and the researcher's epistemological stance, the rationale for the qualitative design, and selection of multiple approaches. Given the complicated, changing political environment and setting of the studentship, it was important to track such developments during the life of the research. This provided an auditable trail for decisions made over the approach.

As noted in the introduction and literature review, there was an enduring interest in the opportunities and challenges faced in the development of communities. Whilst this interest could have been argued as triggered by the financial crisis of 2008, there had been an identified shift from governments across the world towards a greater consideration of wellbeing. This shift was both in terms of the wider discourse and its measurement via the use of indicators. It was argued that a paradigm shift might have taken place with respect to its measurement (Bache & Reardon, 2013).

In addition, community development had been suggested to return to a degree of political and academic prominence following studies on social capital and networks, exploring the relationships and individual capabilities present to live a valued life (Sen (1999) and Putnam (2000) as cited in Carpenter, 2015). Such approaches could be broadly summarised as looking 'Beyond GDP' (Gross Domestic Product) in terms of measuring societal progress or the strength of communities.

Discourse Analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), were the approaches selected. The combination sought to explore the complex collective story as communicated by central government, policy makers and the wider range of stakeholders involved in the development of communities. The selection also aimed to uncover the characteristics and interpretations of community, empowerment and resilience in terms of successful social action (Phillimore, 2015).

More detail on each of these approaches and information collected through the associated methods follows in Chapters 4 and 5.

### 3.2 Methodological flexibility

The aims of the research were contextually situated in the field of community development and sought to analyse the processes of resilience and empowerment alongside social and political discourse. Specifically, to critically evaluate their relationship and role in the development of resilient and empowered communities in Gloucestershire, during a period of austerity.

Community Development had been suggested as a political project (Emejulu, 2015) seeking to bring people together to reflect on actions and intentions, for themselves and society. Underpinning the approach and research aims however, were links to a variety of relevant disciplines. These included anthropology, politics, economics, sociology, psychology and history.

The concepts of community and community development as areas of activity, work or research had been hard to define, leading to contradictions for those seeking to make policy or measurements (Chanan, 2003). For example, 'community', as with local government, could be perceived as a potential force for positive collective responses and action. Yet at the same time it could be viewed as unduly influenced by a backdrop of neoliberalism, individualism and globalisation. This backdrop had been argued to generate a call for the state to retreat and 'outsiders' excluded (Carpenter et al., 2016). Similarly, community had also been argued as something difficult to enter or extract oneself from (Belton, 2017), which emphasised the challenges in developing, defining and agreeing appropriate aims, design and methodology.

#### 3.2.1 Methodology and the measurement of empowerment

Empowerment had been argued to have a transformative dimension, which could link individual concerns and greater self-awareness to those of the collective - or to put another way perhaps - community action (Ledwith, 2009). However, systematic reviews had suggested there was limited published information evaluating projects and their impacts on empowerment at the individual or community level (Cyril et

al., 2015). In addition, other related reviews in the area of health and wellbeing have highlighted the challenges in developing a definitive measure of patient empowerment, given the lack of consensus in definition and consistency of operationalisation (Barr et al., 2015).

This position could also be explained in part by the complexity of roles that influenced the outcome of empowerment within communities. For example Toomey argued that there were eight roles usually played by community development practitioners that could be explored through the lenses of empowerment and disempowerment (Toomey, 2011). Four, 'Rescuer', 'Provider', 'Moderniser' and 'Liberator' were argued as historical and four 'Catalyst', 'Facilitator', 'Ally' and 'Advocate' as more recent alternatives.

Laverack, in a review of the literature argued there were nine domains for community empowerment, one of which "assessing problems" (2006, p. 114) considers the extent to which practitioners are prepared to listen to what the community want and then act.

In respect of action, Toomey argues:

...[bringing change and empowerment within community development practice] is often most effective when it comes from within, and as such it is vital that practitioners keep not only their eyes open to the real impacts that their actions are having, but also their tongues ready to argue for different approaches when they are so needed. (2011, p. 13)

The selection of an approach which could explore such an area in depth, yet also provide a means to offer insight into how arguments were made for subsequent action was considered to be important.

### 3.2.2 Methodology and the measurement of resilience

Similar challenges were also apparent regarding approaches and methods to explore resilience. It had been further suggested that resilience had become a type of thought, combining rather than describing a single concept, therefore "...as a

result, resilience had become an idea with many different intentions and with a very wide extension” (Chmutina et al., 2016, p. 78). More recently the term had been used when considering community responses to terrorist attacks or ‘bouncing back’ from tragedies, and whilst there were a range of measurement frameworks and toolkits, development in the UK had been slow (Maythorne & Shaw, 2013).

However, some approaches, such as the Wellbeing and Resilience Measure (WARM), developed by the Young Foundation sought to support localism by identifying strengths and weaknesses in the local community. The approach sought to encourage “..communities and agencies to use existing data to create a narrative about local neighbourhoods” (Young Foundation, 2010, p. 3). Maguire and Cartwright contended (as cited in Shaw & Maythorne, 2013) there were two discourses concerning resilience. These were resilience as ‘Recovery’, and as ‘Transformation’, which will be considered further within Chapter 4 outlining the approach to discourse analysis.

Historically however, the concept of resilience had been used across a variety epistemic communities (Welsh, 2014) and in various settings. These had ranged from Ecology to Engineering, looking at returns to a prior state following an impact or test, or as part of the literature concerning disaster management (Maythorne & Shaw, 2013). Some writers had sought to understand the field by developing concepts such as ‘persistent resilience’ (Andres & Round, 2015). This considered the extent to which households and their networks responded to longer term changes in employment or state policies, rather than bouncing back from specific shocks. It was argued that this type of resilience “...is created, and takes place, in local, often informal spaces, and relies on seemingly mundane practices” (Andres & Round, 2015, p. 12).

However, the lack of consensus concerning the conceptual definition of empowerment and resilience had been argued to have led to “...muddled meanings and outcomes, as well as multiple criticisms of the concepts themselves” (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 334). Community Development and Empowerment have been perceived to be closely linked, with Toomey suggesting a need to understand both

the terms and their linkages in more depth, either as “...rhetoric or in concrete practice” (2011, p. 3).

In response to this complexity it was important to develop a flexible approach that could provide a means of exploring the contested links between theory and practice, along with multiple definitional interpretations.

### 3.3 Rationale for the qualitative research design

There were a number of cases to be made for choice of design, not least due to the various disciplines and actors involved, both in terms of local policy development and delivery of community related initiatives.

The constraints for the influence on, or the outcomes of research (when working with government) had been suggested as the degree to which the nature of the research was specified at the outset (Hayward et al., 2014). The necessarily broad scope and complexity of the PhD was demonstrated by the content of the original advert for the studentship. An excerpt is included at Appendix 1 and was an important initial source of information. The advert noted the Council intention to radically change its relationship with people and places. The MTC2 strategy described this as local people needing to “...forge a different sort of relationship with their Council” (Gloucestershire County Council, 2015b, p. 3). Understanding the nature of this relationship and its potential influence was a key consideration in the research specification and design.

However, a degree of cognisance was also required over the studentship setting. This led to the design of an approach that aimed to complement existing quantitative methods undertaken by GCC, such as use of surveys, national datasets and models for the development of the JSNA.

Whilst the researcher reflections on the design and limitations are covered in more detail with Chapter 9, initial reflections from the meetings within GCC highlighted a series of themes and tensions.

These were particularly relevant in developing the proposal during the first year:

1. A general interest in the research scope, but a mixed view as to whether the project and its outcomes would be a 'friend or foe' to the organisation.
2. That a lot of data and information was already held by GCC, not all of it necessarily used to its full potential. A series of external organisations (consultancy firms / universities) had spent time with GCC and also provided various outputs for consideration. What added value would this project bring?
3. Alongside this a recognition that other organisations such as District Councils and larger local charities might be closer, more visible, hold more data and insight that was relevant to communities in Gloucestershire than GCC.
4. Past events played into a perception of the present, from individual reflections on personalities and committees, and opportunities for the future, through to organisation wide events, such as the judicial review over library closures in 2011 where GCC was ruled to have acted unlawfully and not paid due regard to their equalities duties.
5. An expectation to have an answer 'now'. Local strategies and consultative processes such as the Meeting the Challenge (MTC 2) were deemed to have provided the mandate to make changes and therefore the research would (or should) help support that aim. The research question as such was implied as already understood, defined and asked.
6. At the same time, there was a different view over how useful and relevant the MTC 2 consultation had been, in terms of the survey questions asked, approaches and commitment to authentic engagement with the public – such as the creation of a 'Peoples Panel'.
7. There was a general view that communities could or perhaps should 'step up', although the who, how and where the 'stepping up' referred to what was not often clearly defined or articulated.
8. Who also should be telling communities to 'step up' was also unclear, particularly when there was a clear GCC message that they would be 'stepping back'.

These factors required continued negotiation throughout the life of the research, to ensure an appropriate design and balance the needs of a jointly funded studentship. Such considerations recognised the political environment in which the activity was situated (Orr & Bennett, 2012).

3.3.1 Rationale for the selection of multiple approaches and methods  
Community development was a relational activity on many levels, exploring the worlds of individuals and groups. It implies both similarity and difference, and the

marking of boundaries (Cohen, 1985). Utilising multiple methods could provide an enriched picture of the enquiry, considering the impact or 'trace' left behind when individuals interact with each other (Loo, 2012) or "... a way of linking ideographic detail more clearly to broader contextual issues" (Hood, 2016, p. 24). Therefore, using approaches that would explore the interpretations of existing and new relationships, for example as communicated through national agendas or local workstreams as intended by the MTC2 strategy would be of significance.

It had been argued that research findings could be enhanced or made more credible where they had drawn from more than one perspective (Hood, 2016). This was potentially useful given the variety of settings (across GCC, UoG and interview participants), to minimise potential bias of perspective or individual agendas. Given the breadth of areas involved, it was a consideration from an early stage that no single methodology or method might be suitable to provide insight to all that the data could offer (Frost et al., 2010).

Using multiple methods within a qualitative design could help highlight the impact of the approach for the researcher (Frost et al., 2010). This was because it supported reflexive questioning over the different types of knowledge being sought and for the purpose to which it might be applied. Epistemological and Ontological considerations will follow a brief outline of the rationale for selection of Discourse Analysis and IPA.

### 3.3.2 The selection of Discourse Analysis and IPA: Perceived commonalities and divergence

Decisions over selections for data collection, analysis, interpretation and coding rest with the researcher reflecting the subjective elements of a qualitative approach (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Academic writers within the fields of Discourse Analysis and IPA recognised there was no one way in which to conduct the approach. There were warnings of "...no grand agreed-upon body of content for discourse analysis" (Gee, 2014a, p. x), and the dangers recognised when considering the use of IPA "...of 'methodolatary' (the glorification of method)...the novice sees these guidelines as recommendations...rather than as permanent prescriptions" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 5).

The selection and description of these approaches will be considered in more detail within Chapters 4 and 5. However, it was evident that whilst seeking to offer two different lenses through which to collect and analyse information, each also offered shared aspects of relevance to the researcher. For example, both recognise the relational and constructivist aspects of the ways in which meanings are made. Truth is therefore something conditional (Hewitt, 2009, as cited in Gilbert, Cochrane and Greenwell, 2003), created by a discourse and related to the particular narrative and assumptions within it. IPA researchers also note a similar approach in that IPA helps explore the relationships and dependencies of context when considering and responding to feelings and behaviour (Eatough, Smith, & Shaw, 2008).

Utilising both approaches, through the review of texts and participant interviews also sought to illuminate potential divergence and convergence. These differences for example would explore how discourses effected the way in which phenomena can be taken for granted (K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016) alongside considerations of experiences and the aspects that are important to individuals (Smith et al., 2009).

### 3.3.3 The selection of Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis was selected to explore the role of language with regard to the collective story concerning resilient and empowered communities. This allowed for the identification of concepts and 'storylines' often utilised for implementation of a strategy or policy (Bevir & Rhodes, 2012). In this sense, it provided a practical tool to explore language via both descriptive and critical analyses.

Discourse Analysis would therefore provide deeper understanding of the dominant content, context and meanings produced (Gee, 2014b), complementary to IPA, in utilising interviews, documents and observational notes. Given that the use of language played a fundamental role in our interpretation of experience, it could be seen as "...shaped, limited and enabled..." by it (Heidegger (1962/1927) as cited in Smith et al., 2009, p. 194). Therefore, both Discourse Analysis and IPA approaches shared common concerns (Smith et al., 2009, pp. 195,196).

Reviewing and restricting the selection of sources for analysis, given the ambiguities over definition of key concepts and links between community, empowerment and

resilience was a challenge within the research design. 23 texts were eventually selected to incorporate within the full analysis, summarised and ordered chronologically, noting relevance to the research. Further detail on the selection and sampling of sources, including the agreement of key texts is outlined in sections 4.4.2 and 4.4.2.1.

### 3.3.4 The selection of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IPA recognised human experience as an interpretive process, connected through language, relationships and culture (Cassidy, Reynolds, Naylor, & De Souza, 2011). These connections were complicated (Smith, Flowers, & Osborn, 1997), governing the extent of what could be truly disclosed, necessitating an interpretive, in-depth analysis, as opposed to experimental scientific research in the study of human phenomena (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008).

Influenced by the hermeneutical approach of Martin Heidegger, IPA accesses human experience, including how the participant and researcher make sense of reflections within the produced analytic account (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). IPA contrasted with more 'Husserlian' branches of phenomenology which suggest the researcher (or participant) should 'bracket' out or 'suspend' preconceptions or assumptions at the start of enquiry to better 'reveal' the underlying essence of experience. IPA provided the potential for increased nuance and understanding through consideration and interpretation of the author's professional experiences (policy development, commissioning and organisational change within the NHS and local government). This provided a further lens through which to develop the design and analyse the eventual findings.

The nature of a purely qualitative research design meant that a very small number or even single participant could have been selected. Further detail on the sampling and inclusion criteria of participants, along with key biographies is outlined in sections 5.3 through to 5.3.3.

## 3.4 Paradigmatic approach

Regardless of the disciplines and selection of approach, what could be known about concepts such as community, empowerment and resilience and how our

understanding and knowledge on them could be added to, are influenced by the research paradigm. This in turn ultimately influences the research design. Whilst any categorisation might not adequately describe the contents, it had been suggested by that the main research paradigms could be summarised by three groupings or positions – ‘Positivist’, ‘Post-Positivist’ and Interpretivist’ (Grix, 2010).

At the one end of the continuum, the positivist paradigm, whilst defined in different ways by different authors (Bryman, 2015) could be summarised to view the world as existing independently of our conscious knowledge or understanding of it.

Methods used in the natural sciences would be used to observe, seek patterns and explain or predict outcomes in an objective or value free manner. Such scientific or ‘hypethetico-deductive’ methodology, or hypothesis testing to find causal relationships, had been a dominant paradigm in terms of evaluation (Kellogg, 1998). For positivists, there are things ‘out there’ waiting to be discovered that could be verified by our senses. For example, ‘empowerment’ as a concept could be argued to exist and potentially measured in part by numbers of voter registrations, electoral turnout as a percentage of those eligible to vote, or the numbers of volunteers. Whilst being able to register and vote, such approaches to measurement might not capture the meaning of democracy or individual perspectives on the political options available to the prospective voter.

Post-positivism also uses a scientific approach to research, both in the steps taken and construction of reporting of studies. However this line of thinking follows after positivism and the acceptance of an “...absolute truth of knowledge” (Phillips & Burbules, 2000, as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 7). It also recognises the potential for multiple perspectives from participants rather than a single reality (Creswell, 2012) and therefore the connection between cause and effect is not viewed as rigidly.

At the other end of the paradigmatic continuum, Interpretivism does not view the world as existing independently of our understanding of it. It is created through the interaction of individuals, interpreted, and meaning created in numerous ways (Creswell, 2012). This had implications for the approach and use of methods, what could be observed or measured and the extent to which an objective analysis could be provided or is even realistically achievable. Such ideas have had increasing

significance for the Social Sciences, being described as the 'Interpretive Turn' (Rabinow, 1987) signalling a shift from the dominance of positivist or post positivist approaches. For the interpretivist, a greater weight is placed on understanding phenomena, accepting that meaning is contingent and does not exist in its own right, but is built through human interactions in ways that are often particular to individuals' own values (Dickinson et al., 2013; Robson, 2011).

The study of empowerment for an interpretivist might centre on the factors that made the act of voter registration, or turning out to vote what it was, "...rather than something else" (Hay, 2011, p. 172). This could lead to increased understanding of tactical motives, meanings that created the context or informed the decision to vote (or not), rather than purely focussing on the numbers of those that casted them.

In terms of the Social Sciences, paradigms therefore had implications for the choice of approach, methodology and underlying assumptions concerning the role of the researcher. These matters considered how methods and models are used to study society, and the theories that arose from enquiry (Harrington, 2005).

There were also implications for the depth and breadth of data collected and analysed. For example, separation between positivist and interpretivist methods alongside non-participatory and participatory approaches (Richardson, 2013), or alignment between post-positivist thought and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2003). It might also reflect an acceptance that phenomena could only appear once in the sample, yet still be significant within the qualitative social research (Wilmot, 2005).

Furthermore, claims over paradigms of knowledge were also interwoven with philosophical assumptions concerning Epistemology and Ontology, regarding the nature of the natural and social world (Hockey, 2015).

### 3.5 Epistemological and ontological considerations

Epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge itself, what we could claim to know and therefore how valid or reliable those claims are. Ontology considers the nature of the world, and therefore these considerations often emerge together.

There are a range of Epistemologies, for example 'Objectivist', where meaningful reality exists apart from any conscious awareness of an object's existence and objects of inquiry carry the meaning waiting to be discovered. 'Constructionism' proposes that meaning comes from our mind's engagement with the world, that the subject and the object generate meaning, and therefore could be constructed by people in various ways. 'Subjectivism' however suggests meaning is imposed on the object by the subject. The object makes no contribution to the generation of meaning, which may come from anything but an interaction between the subject and the object to which it is ascribed (Crotty, 1998).

These stances therefore affect what we could know, our choice of approach and perspective on how accurate our claims may be. So, in terms of a local authority and its implementation of policy, this will reflect a complex prior process. What may be seen as a 'true' picture of reality or the nature of knowledge or 'evidence' in relation to claims over policy will be challenging to uncover or interpret. However, this is important given impacts of decisions on individual or community experience and electoral accountability. Resulting policies could have consequences for individuals and communities, for example where alternatives to the state provision such as volunteering and donations have been put forward (Slater, 2014).

In terms of the research design, recognising the significance of construction, connections and contradictions between wider discourse and individual experience could assist in exploring the nature of relationship between the Council and its population.

### 3.6 Additional influences on the research design

Governmental approaches and claims to 'evidence' have been influenced by the concept of New Public Management (NPM). This necessitated the need to combine evidence and results, achieving dominance within public sector policy (Taylor, 2014). Alongside this development, calls for Evidence Based Policy (EBP) had grown. This idea, whilst applied in a variety of ways, had been summarised as seeking to avoid implementation of ineffective interventions, by using higher quality evidence arising for example from systematic reviews and Randomised Control Trials (RCTs).

It had been argued within reviews of the literature (Oliver et al., 2014) that this is underpinned by assumptions that policy development does not adequately include evidence, that the evidence gap needs to be bridged, and increased use of evidence will improve outcomes for the population. However whilst these assumptions appear appropriate and common sense, it had been suggested that the context in which evidence is created should not be ignored, particularly in terms of "...whose evidence gets what influence, when and how" (Parsons, 2002, p. 14). Furthermore, hierarchies of evidence which place RCTs at or near the top could privilege quantitative data and methods (Bristow, Carter, & Martin, 2015). Such assumptions and contextual challenges reflect the tension between the political realities of policy development, discursive practices and the extent to which evidence could bring transformative change (Carey & Crammond, 2015). Understanding and exploring this tension, was a factor in designing the research approach and selection of Discourse Analysis and IPA.

3.6.1 Governmental approaches to evidence and 'What Works'  
National and local governments have sought to find 'what works', and in the United Kingdom this had seen the creation of the 'What Works Network' initiative in 2013 to help government, commissioners and practitioners improve decision making, prioritise the use of evidence and select the best methods should that evidence not exist. The network of centres covering areas of public policy in excess £200bn, supported a need to deliver cost-efficient and useful services (What Works What Works Network, 2014).

Whilst these aims appeared straightforward it had been suggested that might not necessarily be the case. For example, improving or increasing the amount of information on what works from the networks' perspective may not actually be what users require or preferred, or may contribute to an overload of data alongside other sources. Indeed, it could be that the network of centres found that their outputs "...are misinterpreted or ignored" (Bristow et al., 2015, p. 135). The creation of the what works network was noted by the National Audit Office (NAO) as part of their 2013 report 'Evaluation in Government'. This report reviewed over 6000 outputs published across the 17 main Departmental websites which found

that only two chief analysts always followed their own departmental and central requirements for evaluation. The networks were suggested as a possible aid for commissioners and providers in using evaluation evidence. Therefore, there was on the one hand a strong steer towards utilisation of certain approaches and expectations of outcomes that were not necessarily followed or realised in practice.

In addition, the NAO reflected that:

Some departments have their own guidance on what to evaluate, and how it should be carried out... Responses from 15 departmental chief analysts who completed our survey show that departments vary in the extent to which they follow central and department-specific requirements on cost-effectiveness evaluation...Although requirements do exist, one department chief analyst said they never follow them, and two believed there were no such requirements. (2013, p. 13)

These developments resonated with the researcher, of recurring patterns and events in terms of the origins and variety of approaches in use - or stated as in use - yet operating in different ways in practice when scrutinised in more detail. This supported the appropriateness of exploring the wider discourse and experiences of participants, both in and outside of local government.

Following this report, the Institute for Government, Sense about Science and Alliance for Useful Evidence worked on a rapid assessment tool from May 2015 to May 2016, at the request of the national 'What works adviser' to review the transparency of evidence in Government policymaking. This sought to evaluate a selection of policies from across 13 departments and consider the clarity over: the issue to be addressed, the chosen intervention, the introduction and running of the intervention, and how it would be understood as to whether the intervention worked (Sense about Science, 2016). The review sought to answer the question "...could someone outside government see what you're proposing to do and why?" (Sense about Science, 2016, p. 4).

Searching for policy proposals, the report found that most departmental plans were “...unspecific indications on the direction of action...there is no comprehensive list of government policies for people to find” (Sense about Science about Science, 2016, p. 39). The report also noted the view from officials that there should be different evidence standards for those policies that come out of the competitive electoral process, rather than those worked in within government. In addition, there was little transparency given in general to the consideration of other options. Specifically, Budget announcements or those found in the Autumn Statement were less transparent, as there “...seemed to be a systemic problem with [Budget] policies...which needs to be addressed” (Sense about Science, 2016, p. 36). Therefore, selecting approaches and methods that were accessible, transparent resulting in a range of options, less financially orientated appeared to offer complementary and critical perspectives.

### 3.6.2 Approaches to evidence and the relationship with communities, health and wellbeing

As noted in section 2.2.1, in recent years initiatives have sought to consider community and individual assets, as opposed to deficits and to look ‘Beyond GDP’ as the most relevant measure of societal progress. This envisaged moving away from a focus on the monetary values of goods and services. Economic analyses could be complemented by political, sociological, psychological and historical approaches (Seaford & Berry, 2014).

Alongside developments ‘Beyond GDP’, consideration of ‘Social Value’ was given prominence and formalised through the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. This had been viewed as a means for commissioners to think about the promotion of economic growth alongside social wellbeing when purchasing services. However, following up on the progress made in the use of the Act by local authorities, Social Enterprise UK found that whilst a high proportion (over 60% of the 306 respondents) considered social value within their process, none had published an evaluation of savings following its use. In addition, (32%) of District Councils reported making little or no use of the Social Value Act (Social Enterprise Social

Enterprise UK, 2016). This further illustrated the need to critically explore the contrast between stated intentions and practice.

Further afield, within the European Union (EU) a series of 'Beyond GDP' initiatives were of relevance to the research. These included a 'Beyond GDP' conference held in 2007, hosted by the European Commission, European Parliament, Club of Rome, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The organising group objectives were "...to clarify which indices are most appropriate to measure progress, and how these could best be integrated into the decision-making process and taken up by public debate" (European Commission, 2007). This was followed by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (CMEPSP), initiated by the French government in 2008. Alongside these elements, the EU Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), its Research and Innovation funding programme, supported a series of relevant projects commencing during the 2007-2013 funding period. Arguably the most significant projects for the research included BRAINPOol (Bringing Alternative Indicators into Policy), and 'e-Frame': (European Framework for Measuring Progress). Both projects concluded during 2014.

BRAINPOol, a consortium of 7 EU partners (Including the New Economics Foundation from the UK) sought to increase the use of beyond GDP indicators, by cataloguing the various initiatives in place across the world, and by seeking the views of those producing and using them. The project reported on 17 initiatives (including the UK MWB programme) and 7 case studies creating a long list of 95 indicators with 18 for further exploration. As the chapter on Discourse Analysis will explore, moving Beyond GDP and considering subjective well-being, wider determinants of progress or alternative measurement models is not value-free.

For example, Seaford and Berry in the final BRAINPOol conference summary caution that:

The existing narrative – that maximising growth and market efficiency is the way to maximise welfare – provides a massive simplifying assumption...If we are to change policy priorities and admit more variables, then we will either

have to accept greater complexity or we will have to develop an alternative set of simplifying assumptions, based on a new narrative. (2014, p. 27)

'e-frame', a consortium of 18 EU partners alongside the OECD (including the ONS, University of Birmingham, New Economics Foundation and Young Foundation from the UK) sought to coordinate the various approaches and debates on the measurement of wellbeing, with an ambition to create a common European position that could interact at a global level (Mguni & Cistor-Arendar, 2013). The conceptual framework used built on the 'WARM' measure developed by the Young Foundation in 2010. Both projects highlighted specific challenges and problems in achieving their aims given the complex, multi-dimensional long-term requirements to measure 'Beyond GDP' progress. These reflections also noted institutional resistance and barriers to change. They also highlighted the difficulty in developing a legitimate case for change or narrative that would link policy to action and the measurement of consistent variables over time (Mguni & Cistor-Arendar, 2013; Seaford & Berry, 2014). These barriers were categorised by BRAINPOol under the headings of 'Political, Indicator, Process and Structural'.

Seaford and Berry in the final BRAINPOol conference summary noted that:

The problem was illustrated by an exchange which took place at our workshop in 2013, at which a UK political advisor said that his party was interested in new measures of progress but needed to be told what to measure (presumably by experts such as statisticians and officials); a UK official said that they would not adopt new or unproven measures of progress unless they were endorsed by a credible organisation like the OECD; and the OECD representative said that they were constrained by the political priorities of their member governments (including the UK). (2014, pp. 28-29)

These positions reflected challenge of complexity, influence, assumptions and expectations of actors and organisations experienced locally in constructing the

research design. Kovacic and Giampietro had similarly argued that the failure to move beyond existing approaches around GDP reflects a focus on producing “...better indicators (the quality of formal output) without assessing the fitness for purpose of the pre-analytical choices behind the scientific information used (the quality of the semiotic process)...” (2015, p. 60).

However, for all of these activities and initiatives, the profile and use of the language of community, wellbeing, empowerment and resilience it is argued that whilst “...there is a sense that something is not right with the status quo there is no clear agreement on what is wrong and why” (Bache & Reardon, 2013, p. 909). This was also the experience of the researcher, and it was within this unpredictable environment the design of the research project was developed. These influences articulated the challenges and need to select an original approach which could offer meaning and application to a variety of participants and eventual audiences.

### 3.7 Trustworthiness of research

Creswell suggested that qualitative approaches often made claims based upon multiple perspectives. The goal for such approaches sought to make a deep understanding of a complex social setting or phenomenon where quantitative measures “...simply do not fit the problem” (Creswell, 2012, p. 48).

Evaluating qualitative research had been suggested as less straightforward than quantitative approaches (Rodham, Fox, & Doran, 2015). In evaluating qualitative research, the criteria for ‘trustworthiness’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) had generally been accepted as equivalents to ‘reliability’ and ‘validity’, concepts more commonly associated with quantitative methods (Jeanfreau & Jack Jr, 2010; Shenton, 2004). Whilst there are many types of qualitative validation, the four criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) had been suggested as having “...staying power” (Creswell, 2012, p. 48). The considerations a researcher could make in respect of them are displayed at Table 1.

**Table 1: The four criteria for establishing ‘Trustworthiness’ in qualitative research**

Provisions that may be Made by a Qualitative Researcher Wishing to Address Guba’s Four Criteria for Trustworthiness	
<i>Quality criterion</i>	<i>Possible provision made by researcher</i>
Credibility	Adoption of appropriate, well recognised research methods Development of early familiarity with culture of participating organisations Random sampling of individuals serving as informants Triangulation via use of different methods, different types of informants and different sites Tactics to help ensure honesty in informants Iterative questioning in data collection dialogues Negative case analysis Debriefing sessions between researcher and superiors Peer scrutiny of project Use of “reflective commentary” Description of background, qualifications and experience of the researcher Member checks of data collected and interpretations/theories formed Thick description of phenomenon under scrutiny Examination of previous research to frame findings
Transferability	Provision of background data to establish context of study and detailed description of phenomenon in question to allow comparisons to be made
Dependability	Employment of “overlapping methods” In-depth methodological description to allow study to be repeated
Confirmability	Triangulation to reduce effect of investigator bias Admission of researcher’s beliefs and assumptions Recognition of shortcomings in study’s methods and their potential effects In-depth methodological description to allow integrity of research results to be scrutinised Use of diagrams to demonstrate “audit trail”

Taken from:(Shenton, 2004, p. 73)

The extent to which the selection of IPA and Discourse Analysis addressed these considerations will be further explored in Chapters 4 and 5. However the choice of overlapping approaches that would provide in-depth analysis and offer opportunities to complement and potentially triangulate alongside existing methods in use at GCC was important. In terms of internal scrutiny, team supervisory meetings were held on a regular basis, generally bi-monthly. An example of standard format used for the researcher update is provided at Appendix 4.

Creswell (2012) suggested that intensive and continued engagement and observations in the field provided a strategy to support validation. Therefore, within the complicated research setting, a series of exploratory meetings and pilot interviews were held with GCC staff as part of an organisational induction. These included a selection of Lead Commissioners, Outcome Managers, Local Engagement Officers and other staff from within GCC. These meetings facilitated the building of

trust and initiated wider contacts generated from outside the organisation. These were developed using a snowball and purposive approach across a series of voluntary and charitable organisations. These relationships were maintained through regular observations and attendances at a variety of local towns, forums, clubs, community meetings, training sessions and events across Gloucestershire districts over the course of the research.

In addition to the researcher's professional background and experience, external scrutiny and development of contextual understanding was supported by attendance at academic conferences during the lifetime of the research. During the first year (2015) the Community Development Journal (CDJ) celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Attending the conference highlighted similar issues encountered and discussed within the researcher's setting of local government. These reflected on the conference participants roles with, and involvement in community development. Discussions covered the tensions between community organising and action influenced by thinkers such as Saul Alinsky or Paolo Freire and shifts over recent decades towards 'libertarian paternalism' were considered where individuals are encouraged or nudged to make 'good' decisions without restricting their freedom (Sunstein & Thaler, 2003). In effect, there were many critical self-reflections by conference participants over previous achievements, contradictions in practice and debate over whether experiences on the ground had improved for those living in and working with communities.

In 2016 the researcher attended the 8th International Social Innovation Research Conference (ISIRC) in Glasgow, and in May 2017 presented at the International Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Conference. This presentation looked at the challenges of choosing (and using) IPA, outlining the multiple approaches with Discourse Analysis and discussing examples of the emerging findings.

### 3.8 The agreement of research aims and approach

Within public policy literature, academics and practitioners had been challenged when confronted with the importance of personality and passion. This left few conceptual tools to deal with such findings (Lowndes & McCaughie, 2013).

Recognising individual experience could reflect and inform broader social issues had been noted as an important consideration for community work in the future (Popple, 2015). Using an idiographic and in-depth approach such as IPA therefore afforded increased time to access and engage with the experiences of participants to explore their understanding of empowerment and resilience and meaning ascribed. Including the participant voice was important, as reviews of the literature note that community engagement interventions could have positive effects of health behaviours, self-efficacy and perceived social support (O'Mara-Eves et al., 2013).

Public policy literature also referred to the significance of collaboration and the challenges in finding evidence for links between partnerships and improvements in service user outcomes or reduced inequalities. Therefore using Discourse Analysis within the research design provided an opportunity to in part address gaps surrounding the cultural aspects of collaborative performance, and why actors continued to participate (Dickinson & Sullivan, 2014). These considerations were reflected upon in the research design, supporting a constructivist perspective. This had provided further insight into the complicated interplay and interpretation of events through discourse and experience. The research was intended to uncover further insights into how participants identified themselves, and potentially expose the taken-for-granted assumptions about ways of knowing (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

As part of the scoping for the research proposal during Year 1 of the studentship, a series of mind maps were created, visually representing the original studentship advert and used to assist the supervisory team in defining boundaries for the field of study. Examples of these are displayed at Appendix 5. The second mind map was created to use less corporate language for researcher prompts within discussions, reflecting the potential for use of 'buzzwords' or 'fuzzwords' that obscure meaningful definition whilst increasing their circulation (Cornwall (2007), as cited in O'Donnell & Shaw, 2016). For example, 'Evaluation of Strategy' became 'How will we know if things are better?'

Alongside the recognition of these activities, complexities and changes, an initial summary of the emerging approach was summarised for the GCC Commissioning Board and for a UoG Research Symposium during the first year of the studentship and is attached at Appendix 6.

This summarised the researchers' perspectives on the early implications and opportunities for the research, which included:

1. The use of participatory approaches and extent to which co-production is realistic / central to the enquiry
2. Access and engagement with formal / informal networks, consideration of how and why they form
3. Understanding of individual life histories and role identity
4. Considerations for reciprocity / and potential to 'recruit' individuals to support GCC outcomes

These key concepts led to the selection of a qualitative methodology using multiple methods to create a holistic account (Creswell, 2012). Using semi-structured interviews, a phenomenological approach linked to the textual analysis of discourse was eventually proposed to best investigate the way these experiences affected their views of the world (Gallagher, 2012), and understandings of empowerment and resilience.

Coming to a conclusion over the approach reflected a process which reviewed the five qualitative approaches outlined by (Creswell, 2012): Case Study, Ethnography, Phenomenology, Narrative Research and Grounded Theory. The research aims and objectives were reviewed against these in order to select the most appropriate for the project, whilst mindful of the author's setting within GCC itself.

Discounting factors for the other approaches included the diverse nature and setting of proposed participants (Ethnography). Therefore, focussing on one group within a narrower setting might not have reflected the breadth or networks of community activities underway. Individuals did not necessarily primarily identify or describe themselves in the pilot interviews with one definition when discussing community, empowerment and/or resilience (for example as a carer, service user, employee, by age or gender). Appropriateness for PhD study was considered (Case Study). This did not specifically focus on the use of case studies per se in terms of

approach but reflected the large number of case studies already available for access by GCC from organisations such as the Local Government Association (LGA), New Local Government Network (NLGN) and more. Therefore, these two approaches were discounted first, and further work was undertaken to consider the remaining three approaches. Whilst there was potential to use several approaches, (summarised in Table 2) these options were reduced and distilled into a final proposal for the UoG Faculty Research Degree Committee (RDC).

**Table 2: The five qualitative approaches**

Characteristics	Narrative Research	Phenomenology	Grounded Theory	Ethnography	Case Study
Focus	Exploring the life of an individual	Understanding the essence of the experience	Developing a theory grounded in data from the field	Describing and interpreting a culture-sharing group	Developing an in-depth description and analysis of a case or multiple cases
Type of problem best suited for design	Needing to tell stories of individual experiences	Needing to describe the essence of a lived phenomenon	Grounding a theory in the views of participants	Describing and interpreting the shared patterns of culture of a group	Providing an in-depth understanding of a case or cases
Unit of analysis	Studying one or more individuals	Studying several individuals that have shared the experience	Studying a process, action, or interaction involving many individuals	Studying a group that shares the same culture	Studying an event, a program, an activity, more than one individual
Data collection forms	Using primarily interviews and documents	Using primarily interviews with individuals, although documents, observations, and art may also be considered	Using primarily interviews with 20–60 individuals	Using primarily observations and interviews, but perhaps collecting other sources during extended time in field	Using multiple sources, such as interviews, observations, documents, artifacts
Data analysis strategies	Analysing data for stories, “restoring” stories, developing themes, often using a chronology	Analysing data for significant statements, meaning units, textural and structural description, description of the “essence”	Analysing data through open coding, axial coding, selective coding	Analysing data through description of culture-sharing group; themes about groups	Analysing data through description of the case and themes of the case as well as cross-case themes
Written report	Developing a narrative about the stories of an individual’s life	Describing the “essence” of the experience	Generating a theory illustrated in a figure	Describing how a culture-sharing group works	Developing a detailed analysis of one or more cases

KEY: Relevant for research

(Derived from Creswell 2012).

In addition, a research project was already underway looking at active communities between GCC and UoG. This used Grounded Theory and Social Return on Investment within its design, and therefore would offer a complementary lens and source of intelligence for the research and for GCC. Narrative Research was discounted given that a Phenomenological approach would also focus on individuals and interviews, although there was a strong case for its use. Discourse

Analysis would provide a different and arguably broader context to consider themes and narrative, against which to complement and contrast with Phenomenology. In addition, the utility of action research was discounted as with Grounded Theory, given the significant internal organisational change already underway within GCC and continuing over the life of the research.

The proposed approach was developed as a means of addressing the research questions most fully, yet cognisant of the need to manage and reconcile competing interests (Orr & Bennett, 2012) given the authors setting within GCC. The organisational influence and context were considered as part of the researchers own reflective journaling to ensure that options promoted and selected for consideration were on a fair and transparent basis.

### 3.9 Chapter summary

The research was designed in the midst of a complicated and changing environment which was subject to various internal reorganisations and staff changes at GCC. The broad scope of the PhD outline as drafted by UoG and GCC, coupled with a large array of external frameworks, conceptual measures and policy documents created challenges for refining the design in light of many potential topics for exploration and methods to engage. The studentship sat within a context of a Council desire to forge "...a different sort of relationship" (Gloucestershire County Council, 2015b, p. 3) with communities.

Uncertainties over definitions and types of discourse, roles and responsibilities within that relationship also appeared to generate conflicting views. These reflected the nature of the question that should be asked in terms of how communities were defined or described as empowered or resilient, or the response that was assumed as expected. The researchers' personal reflections were of a sense of a continuing repetition, reappraisal or revision of previous events. Analysing and critically evaluating the conceptual complexities of community, empowerment and resilience and their role in the development of communities in Gloucestershire during a period of austerity, were therefore a key aims of the research.

The rationale for the selection of Discourse Analysis and IPA reflected the contention that community work and associated theoretical perspectives could be argued to inhabit the spaces between the intentions and experience of policy (M. Shaw & Martin, 2000). This “...dilemmatic space...” of community development work (Honig, 1996 as cited in Mayo et al., 2008, p. 30) or “...grey area...” of discourse (Bristow, 2010 as cited in Maythorne & Shaw, 2013, p. 3) supported the need for methodological flexibility through the use of multiple qualitative approaches as a means to explore the research questions. This had particular relevance given the significance of holding both the individual experience and wider challenges over public systems, services and efficiencies in balance (Lipsky, 2010). Given the complexities and challenges in developing the research design, a minimum objective was to deliver a participatory approach in some shape or form. This would be consistent with the principles of community development and offer an alternative lens to existing analyses undertaken by GCC.

The scope and flexibility offered by the studentship team also afforded the opportunity to deploy multiple qualitative approaches to complement existing analyses. The selection of Discourse Analysis and IPA could also provide an alternative lens, a ‘mirror’ back to GCC in some sense, something viewed as important by GCC staff involved in the development of the research design. This lens would help focus in-depth on the meanings of participant experiences alongside consideration of the wider discourse on community, empowerment and resilience. Within the studentship team it was considered that the approach could therefore be seen as a ‘mirror’ reflected back to the Council. This could offer insights in terms of the state of its relationship (and recurring behaviours) towards communities, insights relevant at a local level and beyond.

The next chapters will outline the approach taken in utilising Discourse Analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in more detail.

## Chapter 4 - Study 1 - Discourse Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

Across the 'state' there were numerous agencies and experts generating information as evidence to help constitute knowledge and policy. Discourses provided narratives, pre-conditions or boundaries within which political strategies might be defined or goals realised (Lemke, 2007). Therefore, analysing discourse could provide insight into how certain phenomena, such as an 'empowered community' was understood, by whom and how that meaning was normalised.

This chapter will explore the definitions of discourse and consider the philosophical underpinnings to these meanings within the literature. The relevance for the research was that discourses could provide the setting and context for policy-makers, the media or the public to direct discussions and agendas. This could concern the mediation of social and political relationships (Starks & Trinidad, 2007), for example around community development, empowerment and resilience. This in turn allowed for the identification of concepts and 'storylines' often utilised for implementation of a strategy or policy (Bevir & Rhodes, 2012). How this chapter is located within the structure of the thesis is displayed at Appendix 3.

Local authorities had many statutory and discretionary duties requiring policies and strategies to support implementation and delivery. The Care Act 2014 for example, placed a statutory duty on them to promote the well-being of individuals. Local authorities and CCGs also had joint duties in the development of JSNAs through the local Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) strategy. The JSNA as such was seen to provide the evidence and story for the health, public health and social care commissioning decisions made within any given geography. This outlined the local position in respect of needs, assets and their relationship to wellbeing (Local Government Association, 2011).

Exploring how individuals might identify themselves, or have behaviours structured within a discourse of community development (Emejulu, 2015), was an important concern. Therefore, the author also wished to explore whether the discourse made

sense of, or was disconnected from, realities faced on the ground, experiences and participant interpretations.

## 4.2 What are discourses?

Discourses are a way through which meanings are constructed and practices extensively (although not exclusively) developed through language. Discourses are systems of meaning or “...an ensemble of ideas” (Dickinson et al., 2013, p. 2) and such analysis sought to explore how language was used in a given situation (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

Language was an important part of discourse, and might also refer to texts – but also wider practices, such as the social political and cultural phenomena to which the texts were linked (K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016). For example, to analyse speeches on the ‘Big’ or ‘Shared’ Society, might also include associations with economic challenges arising from the preceding financial crisis or inter-generational differences in prosperity.

They could also offer expectations over public and government behaviour:

Because people who are just managing, just getting by don’t need a government that will get out of the way, they need a government that will make the system work for them. An active government that will work for them and allow them to share in the growing prosperity of post-Brexit Britain. (May, 2017b).

These associations therefore were argued to enter everyday use and appeared as normal or common-sense positions that supported how individuals understood or constructed the world around them. These positions and use of political language were not fixed but creative and transformational over time (Finlayson, 2012), with consensus “...predicated on ambiguity, not precision” (Freedden, 2005, as cited in Finlayson, 2012, p. 3). Or to use alternative language, identified discourses could “...fix-meaning, however temporarily” (K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 4).

Discourses were therefore of relevance to the development of communities, as Brazilian educator Paulo Freire proposed:

We must never merely discourse on the present situation, must never provide the people with programs which have little or nothing to do with their own preoccupations, doubts, hopes, and fears — programs which at times in fact increase the fears of the oppressed consciousness. It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours. (Freire, 1996, p. 77)

Discourse, collaboration and dialogue have been used by policy makers as a means to assist governments, both national and local in organising their resources (Dickinson et al., 2013). Similarly, within the NHS Constitution, patients have the right to be involved in the planning of healthcare services commissioned by NHS bodies (Department of Health, 2015). During the last NHS re-organisation prior to the HSCA 2012 Act, a key phrase cited and used as the title of the public consultation was “...No decision about me, without me” (Department of Health, 2012, p. 1) , encapsulating the (arguably ‘Freireian’) message put across by national policy makers.

#### 4.2.1 What is Discourse Analysis?

There was no single way to undertake, or version of a Discourse Analysis (Bryman, 2004), similarly, definitions of what discourse was could also vary, as an “...umbrella field” (Nikander, 2008). Descriptions therefore could have little meaning, through to extreme precision (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Jørgensen & Phillips suggest that a useful starting place was to consider a discourse as “...a particular way of talking about and understanding the world” (2002, p. 1).

The research followed the steps proposed by Dunn and Neumann (2016) and these are outlined in sections 4.3 and 4.4. The approach was intended to provide deeper understandings of the dominant content, context and meanings produced (Gee,

2014a), within the texts selected for analysis. This could provide insight into “... how we come to take certain phenomena or an entire social reality for granted” (K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 2) or investigate the ways in which identities and behaviours were shaped (Derrida 1974, Foucault 1980, Howarth 2000, Laclau and Mouffe 2001, as cited in Emejulu, 2015).

What discursive approaches shared however, was the recognition of a social constructionist foundation. This foundation supported the view that language was not just a reflection of texts or of talking, but created meaning, ideas, processes and phenomena “...that make up the social world” (Nikander, 2008, p. 413).

#### 4.2.2 Structuralism and Post Structuralism: their relation to discourse and its analysis

Historically, various approaches have emerged in terms of what could be considered Discourse Analysis, being broadly summarised as ‘Structuralist’ or ‘Post structuralist’. For structuralists, language (primarily talk and texts) were seen to have relational structures that could be observed. This they felt, pointed to a master underlying structure that organised social relations. Post structuralists however argued that language could not be adequately analysed in this way. Whilst they would agree with structuralists that the meaning of words results from their relationships to each other (Crotty, 1998), they argued aspects beyond the talk and texts themselves required consideration. For example consideration of the shared meanings and practices through which identities could be created, mediated and constructed (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). In effect these aspects beyond the talk and texts acted as a means to distribute knowledge, which shaped our personality, thoughts and feelings (Emejulu, 2015).

It has been argued that much post structuralist thought has been influenced by the works of Michel Foucault (K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016). This had particular relevance for community development as Foucault considered language, its impact and “...ways of thinking and being, and ways of doing power” (as cited in G. Mackie, Sercombe, & Ryan, 2013, p. 396). Offering challenge to those in power and proposing options for the future have been proposed to sit at the core of community development activity (Pople, 2015).

Foucault argued that discourses were part of a given context yet also influential in creating it, being analysed as “...practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 1970, as cited in K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 18). This had parallels with the mediating roles relevant to community development, such as the street level bureaucrats who were also seen as embodying a larger state narrative (Lipsky, 2010).

Understanding power relations and practices were significant for community development, having implications for whether communities complied or resisted (Somerville, 2016). Such relations could also shape perceptions of economic inequality and social justice (Poppo, 2015) and whether as Somerville suggested, that “...some citizens would be considered of lower value than others” (2016, p. 232).

Approaches have developed that were often described as undertaking a ‘Foucauldian Discourse Analysis’. However, it has been suggested that a strictly ‘Foucauldian’ approach to the analysis of discourse did not exist, given the development of Foucault’s own thinking and various writings over the course of his life (Hook, 2007). From a Foucauldian perspective, it was reasonable to conclude that power was relational, all around us, acting “...through people rather than on people” (Poppo, 2015, p. 83). For example, in his discussion of discipline and the development of the prison system, Foucault wrote that “...Discourse will become the vehicle of the law: the constant principle of universal recoding” (1995, p. 123). This observation considered how the romantic notions of the criminal were ‘recoded’ by law makers into new accounts and discourses, generating fear, respect, order and the “...love of law and country” (1995, p. 123). This had parallels with the romantic and relational descriptions of often inefficient historic activity concerning communities being rewritten in terms of future efficiency and functional boundaries.

#### 4.3 Identification of discourse - continuity, change, or rupture?

It was suggested that most analyses of discourse would focus, although not always exclusively, on one of three aspects (K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016). First, ‘Continuity’

considered the connections and organising principles within any given discourse. Second, 'Change' as its name suggested looked at the developments, appearance or disappearance of elements over time. Finally, 'Rupture' concerned any gaps or breaks in the discourse, reviewing silences to hear less privileged voices.

In consideration and development of the research aims, and decisions over project scope, it was agreed that the whilst each aspect would be of use, the main focus would be on 'Change'. Much work had already been completed on 'Continuity' in terms the principles surrounding community development, empowerment and resilience discourses, such as the links between neo-liberal perspectives and the roll back of the state (Ledwith, 2009; Mayo et al., 2008; Newman, 2014; O'Donnell & Shaw, 2016; Popple, 2015; Taylor-Gooby, 2013) and the increasing pressures of an ageing population and structural reform of the health and social care system (McGarry, 2015; Penny, 2016; Scambler et al., 2014). The use of IPA would provide the opportunity to hear less privileged voices using in-depth interviews as focussed on in the 'Rupture' approach. Therefore, 'Change' could potentially offer more perspectives and explore the range of options represented to individuals and communities within a given discourse. This was particularly relevant during a period of austerity.

4.3.1 Influences on the identification of discourse: Community development  
Reflecting on the last 50 years of the Community Development Journal, tensions had been noted between the use and practice of 'community' for collective action. These tensions reflected upon community development as a justification for the retreating state and individualism, supporting the "...grand narratives associated with neoliberal institutions..." (Carpenter et al., 2016, p. 3).

Within the field of community development, Emejulu recently proposed three significant periods of 5-7 years for conducting Discourse Analysis, based on the review of 121 American and British community development texts from 1968 to 2000.

These were:

1. the fracturing of the New Left from 1968 to 1975
2. the rise of the New Right from 1979 to 1985
3. the convergence of left-right politics from 1992 to 1997

The most recent period reflected the dominance of neoliberal approaches to the market, operation of the state and individual freedoms. Emejulu argued that this period created the perception of a "...common sense approach" (2015, p. 10), which had inhibited the development of alternatives.

Tensions arising from the neoliberal approach have been noted between personal freedoms and wider societal responsibilities. This change in state - citizen relations was perhaps most clearly articulated in the UK as part of the discussions surrounding the 'Big Society'. This concept tapped into the wider political discourse around self-determination (Buser, 2013), and decentralisation, devolution and localism (Painter et al., 2011).

Emejulu identified two discourses within the third significant period of the 1990s, relating to "transformation" and "participation" (2015, p. 133). Transformation reflected the extent to which community development could play a role in resisting neoliberal practices, through a reinvigoration of "...democracy, collectivism and welfare" (2015, p. 146). Participation reflected the ways in which community development was used to reconcile the public to the primacy of the market and the privatisation of public life. The participation discourse embodied values of choice, competition, freedom and efficiency also reflected within the 'Big Society' narrative.

For example, the UK Prime Minister stated the following in a speech during a visit to Liverpool - the scene of riots in 1981 and 2011 - in the months following the general election of 2010:

You can call it liberalism. You can call it empowerment. You can call it freedom. You can call it responsibility. I call it the Big Society. The Big Society is about a huge culture change where people, in their everyday lives,

in their homes, in their neighbourhoods, in their workplace don't always turn to officials, local authorities or central government for answers to the problems they face, but instead feel both free and powerful enough to help themselves and their own communities (Cameron, 2010).

The closeness or proximity of neoliberal discourse and that of resilience and empowerment (Bulley, 2013) had implications for communities. This could influence the role and extent of state intervention and local responses to economic change (Tait & Inch, 2016), by seeking to make citizens more active and ultimately responsible for their individual destinies. How such discourse was interpreted or experienced becomes more significant for local authorities and communities, if the ultimate aim of community development was to empower (Toomey, 2011) or challenge existing power relationships (Popple, 2015).

#### 4.3.2 Influences on the identification of discourse: resilience and empowerment

The variety of applications of resilience and empowerment as concepts, often used interchangeably and lacking consensus over definition (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013) were discussed in Chapter 2. Concluding on those discussions in the context of a political environment and discourse that has promoted individual agency over structural factors, resilience had become a buzzword for practitioners, policymakers and community activists (O'Donnell & Shaw, 2016).

O'Donnell and Shaw suggested a number of prevalent narratives linked within the resilience discourse: resilience and wellbeing, risk (e.g. of natural forces, public disorder, terrorism or recession), emergency (natural disasters), self-help and good citizenship. However, they cautioned that the ambiguous nature of definitions, the politics of who decides which were used could lead to an over reliance on the use of resilience. This in turn held a risk that "...depoliticises and shifts responsibility for dealing with crisis away from those in power" (O'Donnell & Shaw, 2016, p. 2).

Other perspectives on resilience reflected on the tensions between security and liberty. These considered the extent to which individuals and communities were

empowered by the state to be real agents in decision making over what needed to be resilient, why and at what level (Chmutina et al., 2016).

Empowerment had been seen to be a key aspect of the discourse surrounding local democracy or 'localism' (Painter & Pande, 2013; Tait & Inch, 2016), joint commissioning of health and social care (Dickinson et al., 2013) and health policy and prevention (Chiapperino & Tengland, 2016). Chiapperino and Tengland distinguish between earlier uses of 'radical' empowerment, linked to the emancipation theories of writers such as Paulo Freire, focussing on social change, and the 'new wave' of empowerment linking the concept to shifts in individual responsibility for health and wellbeing.

However, as part of the research design the concepts of empowerment and resilience were initially defined as a process, which could be expressed as an outcome, where individual and collective adaptation and development could occur in adverse contexts (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). Whilst the use of concepts such as empowerment could often be intentionally vague (Clarke & Cochrane, 2013), a key aspect of this thesis was to understand how this and the concept of resilience were understood by participants.

#### 4.4 The process and approach for analysing discourse

Whilst a variety of approaches are used there were often three common steps in undertaking a discourse analysis (K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016):

1. The selection of a realistic timeframe and set sources to include within the analysis
2. The main representations within the discourse and;
3. Further uncovering of layers within the discourse itself

The analysis of representations and layers within the discourse will be considered in more detail in Chapter 6.

##### 4.4.1 Selection of timeframe for Discourse Analysis

The studentship advert was included at Appendix 1 and within that content a number of timeframes were inferred. These were explored and clarified with the supervisory team. When considering the appropriate time frame and number of

sources to create a manageable sample, a series of steps were taken, and these are outlined below:

1. Firstly, diminishing public resources - a reference to the period of austerity following the economic crisis of 2008
2. The aim to develop 'active' and 'empowered' communities, echoed the JEAC and earlier DCLG report and remit of the Government champion for active, safer communities, Baroness Newlove (Newlove, 2011a). Baroness Newlove was appointed in 2010 with a mission to see how she could "...help change communities" (Newlove, 2011a, p. 3).
3. Lastly the election within the UK of a coalition government in May 2010, coinciding with the Prime Ministers speech on the Big Society in the months following, also provided a logical starting point for the analysis.

Launched with a large degree of publicity (Civil Exchange, 2015), the Big Society narrative explored the creation of active and empowered communities, noting that "...we need a government that actually helps to build up the Big Society. This means a whole new approach to government and governing...[the UK Government had]...turned able, capable individuals into passive recipients of state help..." (Cameron, 2010). Building the 'Big Society' rather than 'Big Government' was a recurring theme within the reports from Baroness Newlove in her role as a government champion (2011a, 2011b, 2012). 2010 was also linked to significant cuts in public expenditure during the first two central government spending reviews of June and October 2010 with local government one of the areas most affected (Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012). Following this, in 2011 (Localism Act) and 2012 HSCA (Health and Social Care Act) saw two significant pieces of legislation created with relevance to the research. These both reflected intentions to change the nature of power relations with the state, shifting power in the case of the Localism Act "...from central Whitehall, to local public servants, and from bureaucrats to communities and individuals" (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011, p. 1). For the HSCA 2012, the white paper which preceded it was entitled 'Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS'. This noted the government intention that putting "...power in the hands of patients and clinicians, means we will be able to effect a radical simplification, and remove layers of management" (Department of Health, 2010, p. 9).

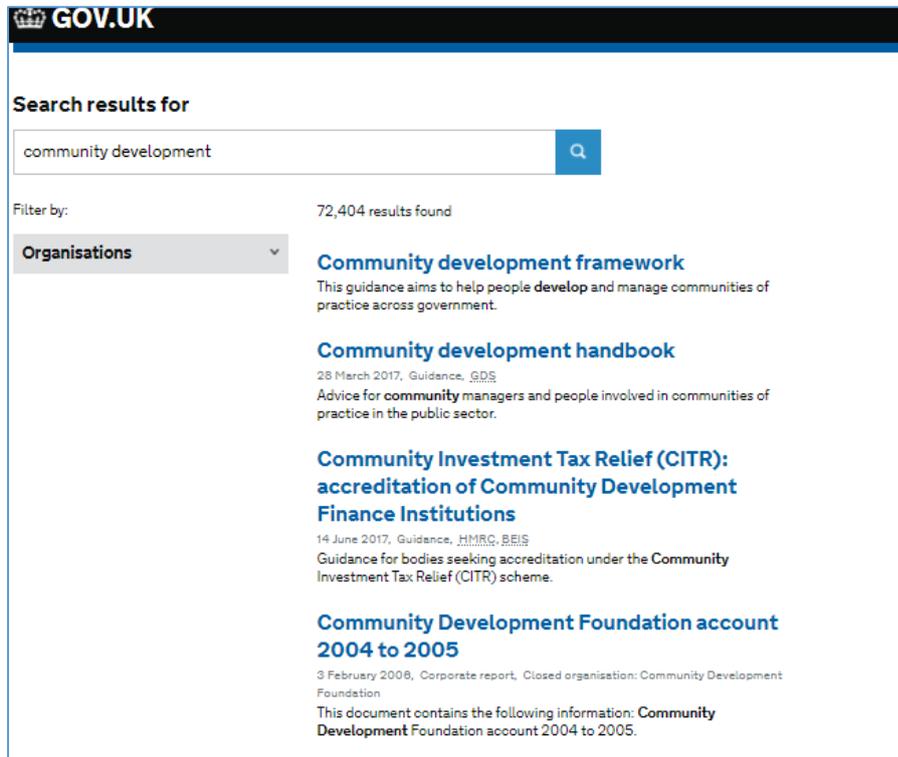
#### 4.4.2 Selection and sampling of sources for Discourse Analysis

In their review of the meanings and uses of localism, linked to geographical assumptions and effects, Clarke and Cochrane (2013) highlight 18 'Major' and 29 'Other' policy and legislative documents relevant to localism between May 2010 and November 2011. However, Chmutina et al. in their review of resilience policy discourse, linked to the built environment, analysed 30 documents covering a period from 2000 to 2015 (2016). Therefore, the number of documents required was a product of development and discussion between the researcher and supervisory team.

Reviewing government (national or local) department plans, policies, reports or related outputs was a challenge, given the ambiguities over definition of key concepts and links between community, empowerment and resilience across a wide range of state activity. Restricting where possible, and excluding documents without direct reference to Community Development, Empowerment and Resilience, still resulted in over 300 potential sources. An additional challenge was that the main government website 'www.gov.uk', a current and key platform for accessing such material - did not do so in an organised way and lacked coherence, offering no "...comprehensive list of the government's policies for people to find" (Sense about Science, 2016, p. 39).

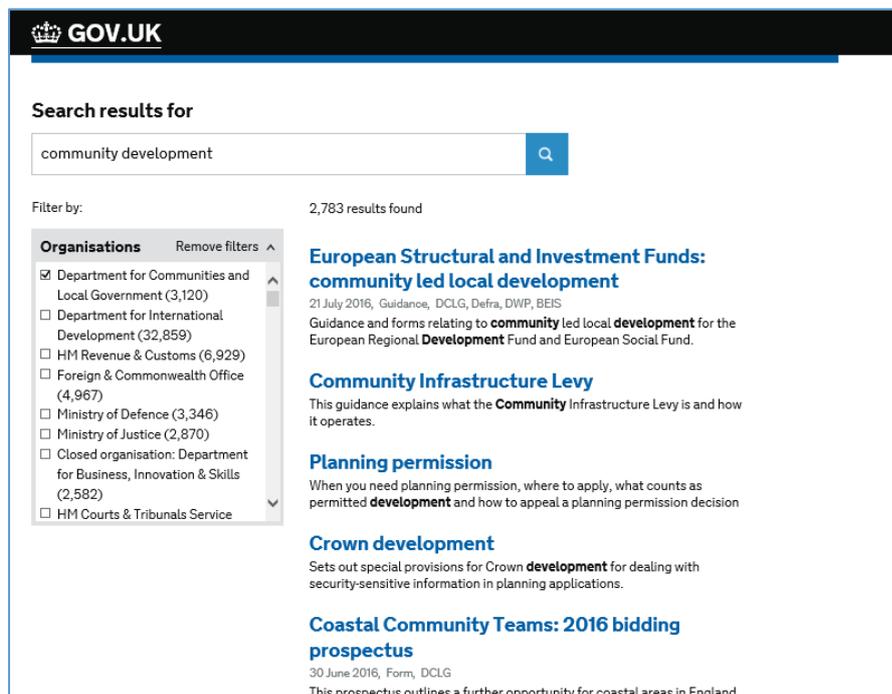
Figure 1 below shows the challenges when searching for community related documents on www.gov.uk. The top result regarded communities of civil servants working in digital roles or on digital products and services, not necessarily to be expected having entered the search criteria. This had parallels with the local position in terms of online transparency discussed in section 8.5, when searching for information on the GCC website.

Figure 1: Search results from [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) for search terms ‘Community Development’



Filtering by organisation (for example on DCLG) the following results were retrieved, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Search results [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) for search terms ‘Community Development’ - filtered on DCLG



Again, the results were not necessarily what would be expected given the search terms. More specific and refined searches reflected the position as found by the Sense About Science review of transparency in policy making (2016), regarding difficulty in locating policy documents.

Searching within individual governmental departments for information or policies was more useful on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk), given that community organising, or social action documents appeared to be split between the DCMS, Cabinet Office and DCLG. For example, Community Resilience, Volunteering and National Citizen Service information was often found within the Cabinet Office, or in the case of Big Society or the Shared Society in the Prime Minister's Office, linked to specific speeches. Evidence of community empowerment was found in a variety of departmental sites, and when linked to health and wellbeing also sat within outputs from Public Health England or DFID.

Before even considering the range of reports available from wider organisations, the collection (and identification) of a suitable sample of community development related material from within [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) was complex. This did not appear consistent with UK government objectives in the Big Society to remove barriers to local action and support engagement with communities (Cameron, 2010).

Given the frequent release of texts and other communications concerning community, empowerment and resilience, this became an iterative process over the lifetime of the research. The main representations within the discourse and uncovering of layers within will be considered and explored further within Chapter 6.

Timeframes and sources were discussed following the first review of the literature and in discussion with the supervisory team during the initial year of the studentship. The themes arising from the first review were used as the basis of a poster presentation delivered to a UoG Research Symposium and to a GCC Commissioning Board meeting during 2015 and is included at Appendix 6.

#### 4.4.2.1 Agreement of 'canonical texts or monuments'

There were key texts that could appear at specific points or that were regularly cited within the secondary literature (K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016) . Meetings with the supervisory team were used to consider the key texts within the wider approach to selection of sources. In addition, a question was included within the interview schedule to highlight texts from the participant perspective. The scope of individual texts, and linkages with other reports was reviewed, and a mind map example completed for the Five Year Forward View was included at Appendix 7, which highlighted the complexity.

The key texts were considered to be:

1. The Big Society speech (2010)
2. The plain English guide to the Localism Act (2011)
3. The NHSE Five Year Forward View (2014)
4. The GCC MTC 2 strategy update (2016) and
5. The 'Shared Society' speech (2017)

Whilst the MTC 2 strategy would not have national or wider coverage within the literature, it was the policy basis on which the studentship was set (see studentship description in Appendix 1).

In addition, a total of 23 texts were selected to incorporate within the full analysis, summarised and ordered chronologically, noting relevance to the research. These can be found in Appendix 8. Once the texts had been selected these were subjected to close reading. All texts were uploaded into NVIVO 10 to assist in the management of data. Alongside the steps taken to define the timeframe, number of sources and create a manageable grouping for analysis, the following steps were taken:

#### 4.4.3 Recognition of the researchers and supervisory / advisory teams 'cultural competence'

In addition to the researcher's background working in health and social care commissioning since 2009, individual discussions were held with the supervisory team to consider the key documents, speeches, perspectives from an academic community development and local government management viewpoints. These drew on their previous experiences of working, teaching and volunteering within

various aspects of community development related activity. Mindmaps were created to visually represent the discussions supporting this process and an example of an iteration can be found at Appendix 9.

#### 4.4.4 Consideration of official, expert and popular discourse

Discourse Analysis could focus on one, or all of the noted areas, although often many texts could span across boundaries. For example, official policy documents, statements or speeches could be co-authored by experts and these could take on wider meaning in popular discourse (for example the 'Big Society'). To define the scope of the analysis it was advised to keep the reader in mind as to the area of discourse and types of documents selected, alongside concerns of necessity and availability (K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016). Given the structure of the studentship jointly supported by a County Council, this directed the analysis to focus on Official and Expert discourse.

In an area where concepts and terms were already ambiguous, popular discourse created a further challenge to creating realistic boundaries for analysis. Whilst perhaps unfortunately this becomes more distinct and polarised, trending on social media in the aftermath of tragedies such as Grenfell Tower, terms (such as localism for example) could "...have a powerful ideological pull with a charm for one and all (even at opposing sides of the political spectrum) principally because its definition, resultant meaning and expression are so difficult to pin down" (Painter et al., 2011, p. 43).

An example here from two online UK national newspaper articles show how popular perspectives on the same issue (in this case, the release of the Casey Review into integration and opportunity in isolated and deprived communities) could vary, in terms of content and focus, use of words and capitalised text.

The first comes from the Guardian newspaper:

Judging the Casey review: 'I'm sick of being told I don't get on with people' In Sparkhill, Birmingham, a handful of those mentioned in Louise Casey's report react to it with a mixture of exasperation and criticism – some of it constructive. (Parveen, 2016)

The second comes from The Sun newspaper:

GHETTO BLASTER: Mass immigration to Britain has changed it beyond recognition and turned communities into ghettos, reveals damning report. The Casey Review heaps blame on the Government for failing to tackle the crisis. WHOLE towns have changed "out of all recognition" and sunk into ghettos because of a failure by governments to handle mass immigration, a bombshell Downing Street report reveals today. (Newton-Dunn, 2016)

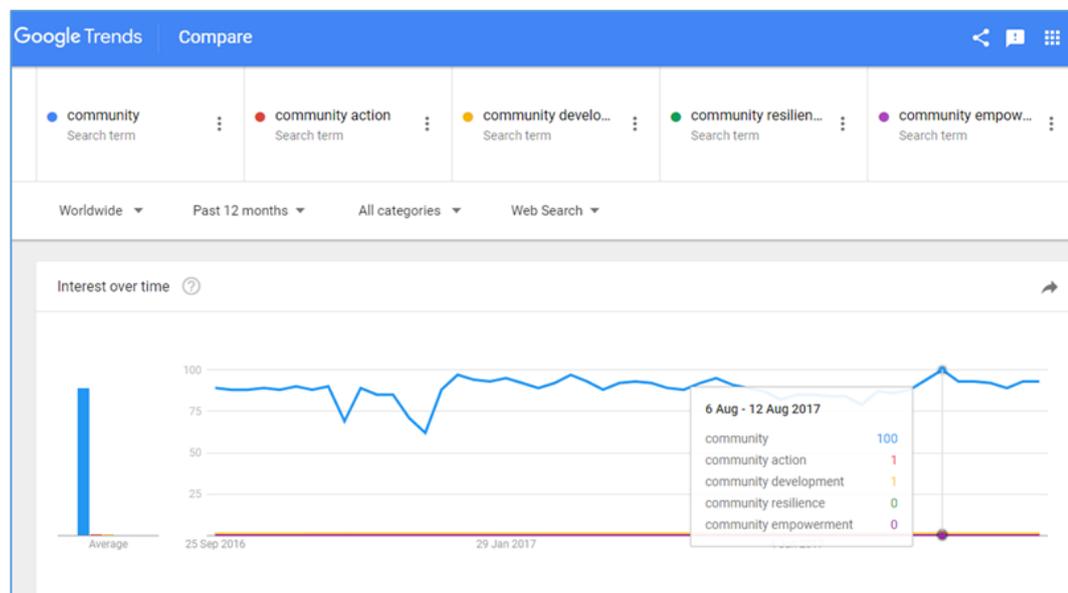
In addition, searching twitter using the hashtag #caseyreview also generated extensive material.

Alongside this iterative process, a review of the Management Journal (The MJ) 'Weekly Top 10' articles published over two separate twelve-week periods (July 2016 – October 2016, December 2016 – March 2017) was undertaken and excerpts are shown at Appendix 10, this included a review of the MJ tag cloud from November 2016 – January 2017 and is found at Appendix 11. The MJ was billed as the leading journal for local government teams, and these reviews helped to inform the key subject areas forming local government discourse and consider some of the arguably popular themes discussed outside of the expert or official spheres. To assist with this process, a review of headlines and articles forming the 'Top 100' news stories for 2016 was undertaken at [www.localgov.co.uk](http://www.localgov.co.uk), the main local government news website. An excerpt from the list of headlines can be found at Appendix 12. Although this will be discussed in later chapters in more detail, this provided some evidence for patterns illustrating the dominance of financial,

managerial and executive issues rather than those relating to or inspired by communities.

This was further demonstrated by reviews of Google Trends which showed how often particular search terms were entered in comparison with others. Figure 3 shows the results for the comparison of a number of search terms: community, community action, community development, community resilience and community empowerment. These compare worldwide google searches over a 12-month period. The score of 100 shows the peak popularity for a search term, with a score of 0 meaning it was less than 1% as popular as the peak result. Searches for 'Community' far outweigh those specifically for other aspects - unsurprising in one sense given its broad and often ambiguous definition - with more refined search terms such as Community Development and Action receiving small ratings. Google Trends enables the analysis of what that those searching for 'Community' also searched for – mainly community colleges or community centres. This perhaps also reflected the broad nature of the definition, and lower visibility or importance of more specific searches.

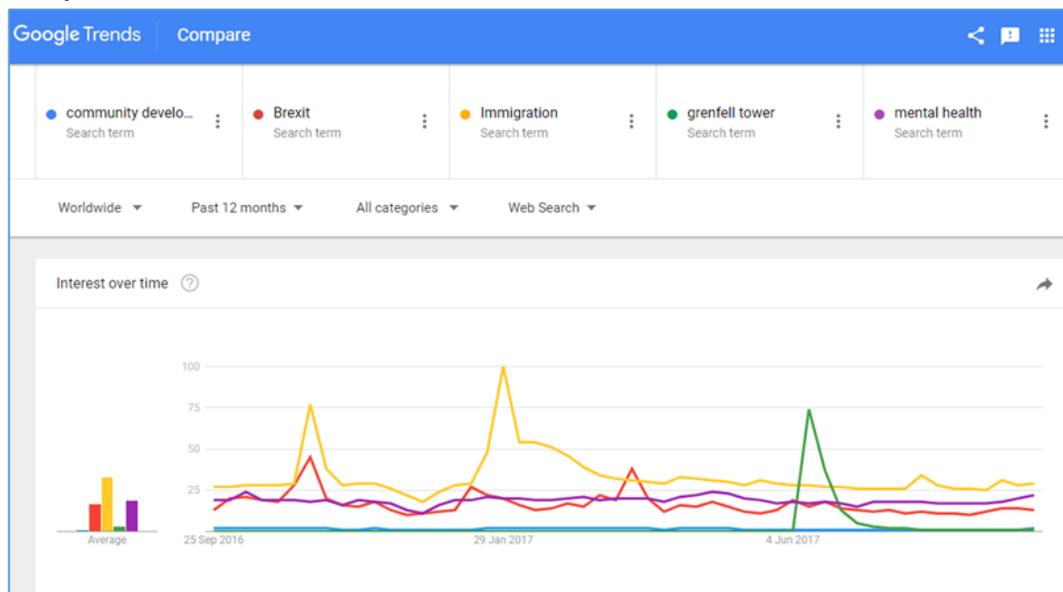
**Figure 3: Worldwide search results Google Trends - Community search terms**



Another approach sought to look at broader subject areas linked to community development to see if a similar picture would be found. As seen in Figure 4, community development was again less searched for compared to other issues

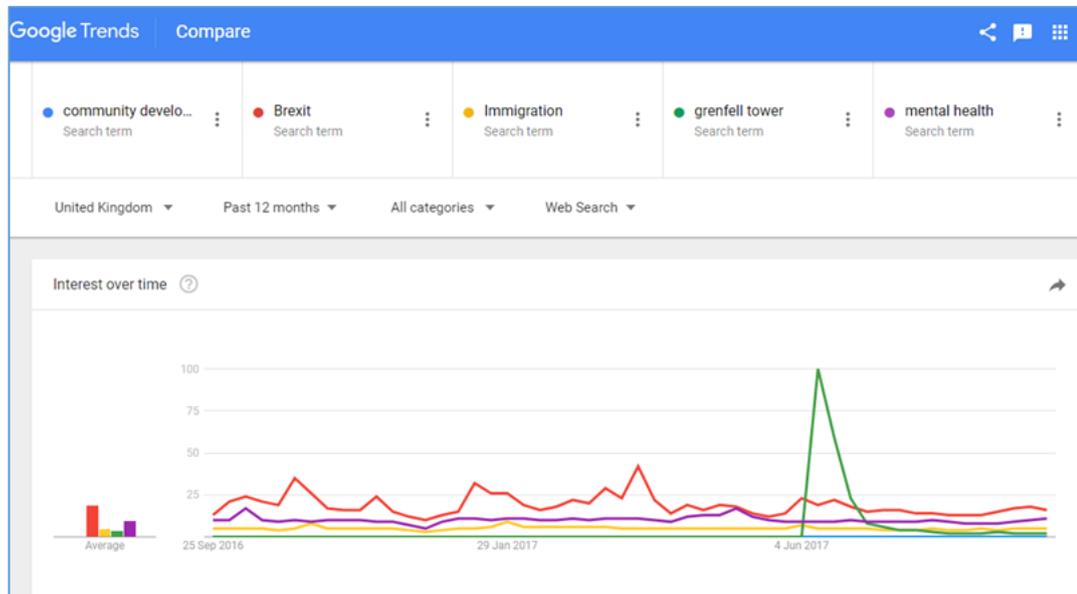
(such as Brexit, Immigration and Mental Health). Peaks could be seen during January 2017 in the immigration interest - where President Trump signed executive orders on Border Security and Immigration, and Foreign Terrorist Entry. The Brexit interest peaked in, November 2016 where the UK High Court ruled the UK Government could not trigger Article 50 on its own, January 2017 where the UK Prime Minister gave her ‘Lancaster House speech’ outlining the negotiating plan for Brexit and March 2017 where Article 50 was formally triggered. The Grenfell Tower interest peaked in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy. Again, this showed the relative difference in interest in community development compared to other search terms.

**Figure 4: Worldwide search results Google Trends - Community Development comparison**



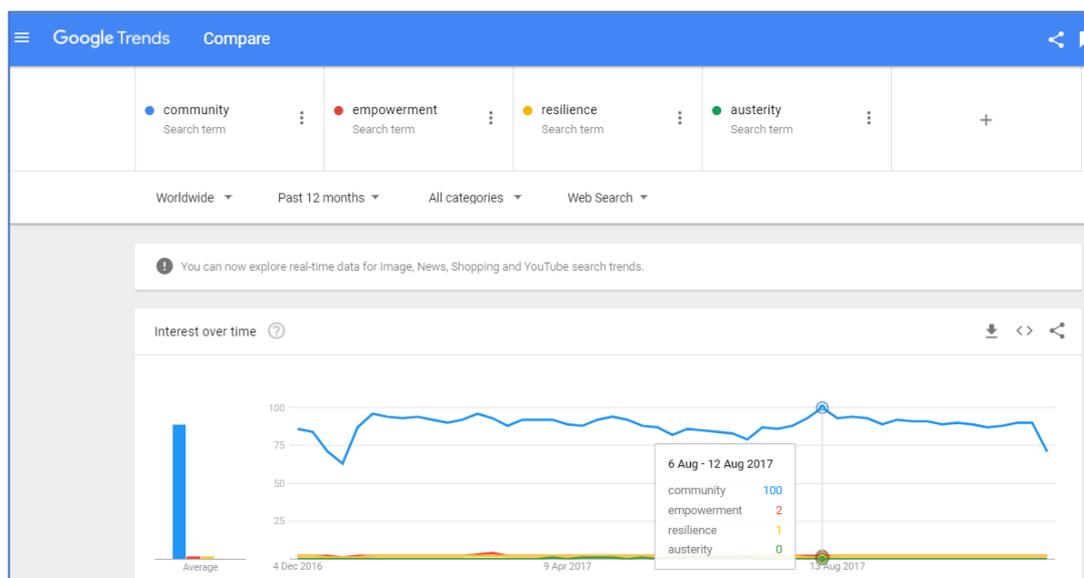
A similar pattern was found when refining the same search to the UK rather than worldwide and is shown at Figure 5.

**Figure 5: United Kingdom search results Google Trends – Community Development comparison**



Returning to the main concepts, Figure 6 below shows the dramatic difference in use of search terms when comparing searches for Community, Empowerment, Resilience and Austerity. Whilst other search platforms were available, these initial results provided some insight into the relative interest of those using the internet to access popular discourse.

**Figure 6: Worldwide search results Google Trends – Community, Empowerment, Resilience and Austerity comparison**



Whilst there were potential limitations of concentrating on expert and/or official discourse and not including popular discourse, it was argued (Hansen, 2006) that

policy makers represented larger groups of individuals, institutions and media outlets. However it was also important to ensure that voices were not considered exclusively (Huysmans & Buonfino, 2008). Therefore, whilst the focus would be given to expert and official discourse, themes arising outside of these spheres would be potentially captured by the use of in-depth interviews.

#### 4.4.5 Repetitions, representations and presupposition

Following initial readings, the first step was to search for repetitions in representations within the texts. For example, this could consider the economic situation as a key factor, either a part of problem – micro management from government and the budget deficit (Cameron, 2010), or as a justification for part of the solution – that government should devolve power, money and knowledge to others (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010).

Presupposition concerned the implicit assumptions and knowledge that was taken as given (K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016). For example, these could reflect the challenges of austerity or an ageing population, or the benefits of integration. Such assumptions however could risk masking the complexity of relationships between groups (Painter et al., 2011).

The texts were also reviewed to consider information that was interpreted and articulated in specific ways, yet not challenged. This could be expressed as common sense, for example assumptions that ‘local’ equates with increased democracy, even though “...imaginaries of place and community ... are potentially powerful but deeply ambiguous political constructs.” (Tait & Inch, 2016, p. 190) Or that communities were deficient in some way, needing to become empowered, integrated, active, safe or strong, often as a means to deliver wider policy aims.

Alongside this analysis it was also important to consider the voices that were absent, or less represented within the discourse. These might provide alternative or differing explanations to the dominant or privileged discourse, perhaps suggesting that “...another world is possible” (Carpenter et al., 2016, p. 3). It could also be that voices were silent due to the stigma surrounding them, as has been argued with disability and mental health policy discourse (Wolfson, Holloway, & Killaspy, 2009).

Furthermore, it could be that there were many, smaller voices such as those recognised within the charitable sector. For example, in their written evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Charities, WhatWorksInclusion noted:

...small organisations are excluded from the discourse. There is no mechanism for them, or with them, to share, learn, shape and impact on social outcomes. The way services are commissioned, delivered, contracted, perceived and evaluated almost serves to reinforce a form of economic and social exclusion within the delivery system...smaller VCS [Voluntary and Community Sector] projects are perceived as irrelevant, not involved or consulted with..." (House of Lords, 2017b, p. 1121)

#### 4.4.6 Predication, subject positioning and metaphorical analysis

Predication concerned the use of language, specifically for example the verbs / adverbs and adjectives attached to nouns (e.g. the use of 'strong' or 'local' communities', 'big' or 'shared' society, 'broken' or 'global' Britain). Subject positioning considered how a knowable reality was constructed through the linking of subjects and objects together in particular ways (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). This could be demonstrated by linking the notion of a 'crisis' to financial matters, care or welfare services. Or for example, the increasing links made between benefit claimants and fraud (Taylor-Gooby, 2013). By using metaphors, phenomena were presented in a very particular way. This could be in the use of financial or market related descriptions, where those working in a particular area become 'providers' and those receiving become 'consumers' (Malone, 1999). For example both David Cameron and Theresa May chose to frame their speeches in the context of a personal 'mission', invoking religious themes, argued to communicate high ideals (Elkind, 1998). Military themes have been prevalent in health policy discourse (Millar & Dickinson, 2016) and had also been referenced within the Big and Shared society speeches respectively. For example, the Big Society speech ended with a 'call to arms' potentially reinforcing the theme (Cameron, 2010), with the shared

society talking of the ‘forces of liberalism and globalisation’ and the need to ‘defeat the stigma [of addressing mental health issues]’ (May, 2017a).

#### 4.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations and risks were considered as part of the proposal development with the supervisory team. The UoG Ethics Handbook was reviewed with advice sought from the supervisory team and additional independent academics as to whether specific UoG Ethics committee approval was required. The research proposal was initially considered of low risk given the interview participants were over 18 years old, not defined as vulnerable and topics were not deemed to be sensitive. All the sources included for analysis were publicly available.

Therefore, whilst approval was sought and gained internally from Gloucestershire County Council as part of their Research Governance Approval process, no formal prior approval was therefore required from UoG. The consensus and conclusions from those consulted were that the research did not require specific ethical approval and was of low risk. Any emerging risks would be managed by the supervisory team in its regular schedule of meetings.

#### 4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the relevance of analysing discourse, and its importance for community development. Analysing and critically evaluating the conceptual complexities of community, empowerment and resilience and their role in the development of communities in Gloucestershire during a period of austerity, were key aims of the research. This chapter has built upon the rationale for the selection of Discourse Analysis and relationship to the study as outlined in sections 3.3.3 and 3.9. This has included assessing the relative importance of the field within wider political discourse, and the complexities and ambiguities that formed the backdrop to the research. It has offered a summary of the background to Discourse Analysis, its development and relevance in terms of the analysis of communities. Whilst there were a variety of approaches that could be taken, the specific steps followed in the research, using in the work of Dunn and Neumann as a guide have

been outlined. This has included an explanation and rationale for the timeframe, sources and key or 'canonical' documents.

The next chapter will outline the use of IPA, the additional approach selected to gather information.

## Chapter 5 - Study 2 - Semi-Structured Interviews

### 5. Introduction

Having outlined the justification for a research design incorporating Discourse Analysis and IPA in Chapter 3, this chapter will describe the approach taken towards the use of semi structured interviews as the appropriate method. The interviews centred on the phenomenon of living and/or working in Gloucestershire communities during a period of austerity. These sought to understand in depth, the experiences of empowerment and resilience. IPA had a basis of phenomenological analysis because it explored the experiences of participants. Yet, it was also interpretative and therefore recognised the role of the researcher in making sense of them (Lamb & Cogan, 2016).

The selection of IPA was methodologically appropriate because it offered space and time to hear the voices of participants. Alongside this the interviews offered the opportunity to explore the impact or relevance of linked discourse, for example the significance of localism within public policy discourse (Ercan & Hendriks, 2013), and the themes of increased accountability, public or patient voice and wider changes in civil society (Scambler et al., 2014). How this chapter is located within the wider thesis is outlined at Appendix 3.

### 5.1 Theoretical underpinnings of IPA

IPA had three underpinning theoretical strands: Phenomenology; Hermeneutics, and Idiography (Smith et al., 2009), each of which are briefly discussed in the following sections.

#### 5.1.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is used to describe a variety of approaches which can overlap in terms of philosophy or method (Langdrige 2007, as cited in Sloan & Bowe, 2014). However, it is commonly considered to link back to Edmund Husserl's philosophical search for a "...phenomenological method" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 13) or creation of a "...science of consciousness" (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008, p. 4). This sought, by adopting a phenomenological attitude, to understand the essential elements of an experience that would transcend the specifics of the situation (Smith et al.,

2009). This would understand the experience as it appeared and was uncovered by applying various steps, such as the 'bracketing' out of taken for granted perceptions, assumptions and thoughts. This enabled a phenomena to be "...described and understood" (Dowling, 2007, p. 132), through exploring its essence, the 'what' was experienced and 'how' it was experienced from the participant perspective (Creswell, 2012). Exploring experiences in depth complemented existing approaches utilised by GCC and offered an opportunity to hear the voices of individuals involved in the development of communities.

The importance of considering experience in terms of community development and action was explained by Saul Alinsky in the following way:

I have improvised teaching approaches. For example, knowing that one can only communicate and understand in terms of one's experience, we had to construct experience for our students. Most people do not accumulate a body of experience. Most people go through life undergoing a series of happenings, which pass through their systems undigested. Happenings become experiences when they are digested, when they are reflected on, related to general patterns, and synthesized. There is meaning to that cliché, "We learn from experience." (2010, pp. 68-69)

### 5.1.2 Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics concerned the theory of interpretation. This considered the methods by which the original intentions of an author can be understood, and texts interpreted. The origins of hermeneutics had their roots in the analysis of biblical texts. This sought to uncover the original message, the meanings and intentions of an author (Metzger & Ehrman, 2005). The hermeneutical approach overlapped with contributions to phenomenological thought. For example, Heidegger, a colleague and successor to Husserl at the University of Freiburg in Germany, argued that interpretation was required to sufficiently understand how the elements of experience appeared. Heidegger considered that individuals were bound up within

the world through language and culture, with aspects of experience being visible and hidden (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, exploring individuals living and working in Gloucestershire during a period of austerity, understanding the context they operated in would be a significant aspect of a phenomenological understanding. According to Heidegger it would be impossible to fully 'transcend' beyond or bracket out all experiences when undertaking an inquiry (Cassidy et al., 2011). In terms of the researcher, Heidegger proposed the concept of our 'fore-structures and conceptions' i.e. the prior "...experiences, assumptions, preconceptions..." (Smith et al., 2009, p. 25) which the analyst brought to any encounter. Whilst these conceptions could not be fully bracketed, they could potentially help, by becoming more apparent or 'known' after engaging with an analysis. This offered an opportunity to not "...relive the past but rather to learn anew from it, in the light of the present" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 27).

Hans-Georg Gadamer, another key influence on the development of IPA talked of 'Horizons of Understanding' when encountering and interpreting texts. This was used to describe what we can know, that there were limits in terms of how far we could see. However, these 'horizons' were not static and could fuse or develop alongside other understandings (Hay, 2011) as the interpretation progressed.

For example, Smith explained:

Thus the phenomenon, the thing itself, influences the interpretation which in turn can influence the fore-structure, which can then itself influence the interpretation. One can hold a number of conceptions and these are compared, contrasted and modified as part of the sense-making process. (2009, p. 26)

This relationship leads toward the idea of a 'Hermeneutic Circle'. Whilst IPA had a series of linear steps to move along and through, there was also the notion of moving back and forth iteratively between individual words, extracts and the whole text. This process was in part prompted by the use of hermeneutic questions, uncovering meaning and creating further prompts (Cassidy et al., 2011). Within IPA

the 'Double Hermeneutic' was also referred to, reflecting the joint account that was created. The account was the product of the researcher making sense of the participant, with the participant trying to "...make sense of what is happening to them" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 3).

Truth claims arising from the IPA analysis were therefore argued to be "...partial, temporary and tentative" (Kidder & Fine, 1998, as cited in Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). Recognising the complexity of interpretation and meaning was relevant for community development as offered opportunities for individuals to develop their thinking and opinions, providing potential for transformative action.

For example, as articulated by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire:

"...why do different newspapers have such different interpretations of the same fact?" This practice helps develop a sense of criticism, so that people will react to newspapers or news broadcasts not as passive objects of the "communiques" directed at them, but rather as consciousnesses seeking to be free. (1996, pp. 103-104)

Exploring interpretations and links to language and culture would be accessed by the use of IPA.

### 5.1.3. Idiography

Idiographic emphasis was central to IPA (Eatough et al., 2008), focussing on the specific or particular, rather than attempts to establish population claims or general laws of human behaviour (Smith et al., 2009). This approach allowed in depth engagement with topics (Harris, Collinson, & das Nair, 2012) potentially offering more nuanced investigation and exploration of issues (Blank, Harries, & Reynolds, 2013). Exemplar IPA studies had been suggested to focus on "...specific individuals as they deal with specific situations or events in their lives" (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 103).

In the present research, the idiographic focus reflected the choice of specific individuals i.e. those working with communities during a period of austerity. It

would seek to explore how empowerment and resilience might play a role in participants' dealing with the situations recounted as part of the interview process.

## 5.2 Participants

As outlined in the introduction and literature review, local governments and those working or operating in the area of community development managed a complexity of formal and informal roles, relationships and responsibilities (New Local Government Network, 2017). Individuals had been seen to 'blend, braid and balance' (Gilchrist, 2016) in terms of strategies utilised to manage this interplay. Such individuals and their activity was defined in a variety of ways as already outlined within the thesis, for example Boundary Spanning (Long et al., 2013; Sandmann, Jordan, Mull, & Valentine, 2014; Williams, 2013) and Street-Level Bureaucracy (Hupe & Buffat, 2014; Lipsky, 2010; Tummers & Bekkers, 2014). The recognition of blurred boundaries potentially included anyone living and / or working in Gloucestershire as a relevant participant. To refine the selection of participants, initial interviews were undertaken as part of the researchers' corporate induction into GCC. Continuing reviews of the literature and criteria were discussed with the supervisory team to provide a manageable sample size. This process is explored in the next section.

## 5.3 Sampling and inclusion criteria

Given that the study was qualitative and IPA idiographic, therefore focussing in detail on individuals in specific situations (Larkin et al., 2006), meant a relatively small number of participants were likely to be selected (Rostill-Brookes, Larkin, Toms, & Churchman, 2011). Whilst there was no right or wrong way to undertake an IPA study, or an answer to how many cases were appropriate for a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2012), much of the literature on IPA suggested that smaller sample sizes provided a greater opportunity to uncover meanings and experiences of participants. For example, in a review of 52 articles employing IPA, it was noted that smaller sizes were the norm, with studies not seeking to achieve a representative sample in terms of population or probability (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Rather, researchers would search for patterns, similarities and differences

across smaller numbers of cases that might lead to generalisations after each case had been significantly explored (Smith et al., 2009).

### 5.3.1 Sampling

The nature of the studentship jointly funded by GCC and UoG meant that the early stage required the completion of a corporate induction at GCC. As part of this induction, a series of contacts for 10 initial meetings were provided by the GCC advisor on the supervisory team. These were considered of relevance to the research in terms of links to communities (through commissioning, contracting and communications roles) and the production of data or analysis for GCC.

IPA used a purposive sampling approach to develop meaningful cases for analysis, and Smith advised a flexible yet pragmatic approach to create a broadly homogenous group. This included socio-demographic factors, with links to the phenomena under investigation. Whilst there was no ‘right’ size for an IPA sample (Smith et al., 2009), a further 10 interviews were undertaken following a snowball sampling approach. The roles interviewed are listed in Table 3 and mindmap outline of the initial research brief discussed in the interviews is provided at Appendix 13. The mindmap helped to provide context, organise structure for discussion and offer suggestions for alternative contacts to pursue.

**Table 3: Initial induction interviews, February - September 2015**

Director of Division
Head of Function within Division (x2)
Lead Commissioner (x2)
Commissioning Managers GCC (x2)
Commissioning Manager Public Health
Outcomes Manager
Engagement Manager GCC
Engagement Manager District Council
Local Engagement Officers GCC (x3)
Function Team leaders (x2)
Function Team members (x4)

From these early interviews, an initial set of themes were summarised and provided for the advisory team shown using a poster presentation for a UoG Research Symposium, and internal GCC report to their ‘Commissioning Board’ shown at

Appendix 6. During these interviews, the GCC representatives were asked for suggestions about other appropriate contacts to meet, with a mixture of snowball (and purposive sampling as the design progressed) used to help with the definition of the research approach and aims.

Reflections from the early interviews with the supervisory team noted that the research could:

1. Work to a different timeframe than the MTC2 programme and would not be viewed as a direct evaluation
2. Avoid focussing on the definitions of concepts which were already regarded as contested
3. Hopefully shine a light on behaviours / practices within GCC and local communities
4. Consider motivations / extent of self-interest within Community Development work

#### 5.3.2 Inclusion criteria

Given the purely qualitative research design it could have been that a very small number or single participant could have been selected (Rostill-Brookes et al., 2011). The use of in-depth interviews would help to elicit further information on family or informal activities - for example, volunteering, trusteeships, or networks not necessarily formally recognised. To refine this, based on reviews of the literature and initial interviews, several criteria were defined, and broad groups recognised as key participants given the structure of the studentship. The groups were:

1. Elected Members of GCC - councillors working with commissioners and representing the public within Gloucestershire
2. Commissioning Officers within GCC - paid staff with a day to day role in commissioning health and wellbeing related services relevant to communities in Gloucestershire
3. Community and Charitable Employees / Volunteers - Given the nature of the study approach and community development focus, to have representation from these groups would be valuable. Particularly if a key requirement from the GCC perspective was to build capacity in the future
4. Carers - estimates from the 2011 census showed approximately 10% of the population provided unpaid care, likely to rise by 40% by 2037 (Carers UK, 2015). A group potentially cross cutting all categories of participant. As with the rationale for community and charitable employees / volunteers, this was another important voice to include, now and for the future

Key criteria were also considered and agreed in January 2016:

1. Geographical Districts - Where possible the sampling sought to provide a degree of coverage across the districts in Gloucestershire
2. Rural / Urban Population - similar in rationale for district coverage, but ensuring rural / urban experiences and service delivery where possible
3. Deprivation - again, whilst would overlap with geographical considerations, could also provide a further lens through which to view experiences
4. Age - The research had a broad scope in terms of potential participants and topics, e.g. austerity and key pressures for GCC around adult social care services and an ageing population. Therefore, the study would focus on individuals over the age of 18. Although children were not the focus of the study, family issues were likely to be picked up in the analysis
5. Gender - it would also be useful where possible to provide a coverage of gender in terms of participants
6. Length of involvement – Participants needed to have been living and / or working / operating within Gloucestershire during the period of Austerity, and for at least a year

The final participant list is summarised in Table 4:

**Table 4: Summary list of final participants**

Summary Information - (If Shared)								
		AGE	GENDER	PRIMARY DISTRICT(s) (Work)	PRIMARY DISTRICT / AREA (Home)	Primary Sector (Work) Type	Primary Sector (Work) Type Area	Current / Historical Sector(s) (Employment / Volunteer / Caring / Other)
1	JAMAL	30-50	M	GLOUCESTER	GLOUCESTER	Charity	Timebanking	Education / Research
2	EMMA	<30	F	FOREST OF DEAN, TEWKESBURY, GLOUCESTER	Bristol	Charity	Housing / Domestic Abuse	CAB / Refugees / Immigration / Homeless
3	SARAH	>50	F	GLOUCESTER	GLOUCESTER	Elected Representative	Local Government (Politics)	Day Centre Manager / Nursing
4	PETER	30-50	M	ALL	FOREST OF DEAN	Council Officer	Local Government Management	Church / Youth Work / Urban Areas: London / Gloucester
5	TOM	<30	M	ALL	COTSWOLD	Elected Representative	Local Government (Politics)	Youth Work / Town Councillor
6	DAVID	>50	M	ALL	STROUD	Charity	Voluntary and Community Sector Support	Mental Health / Employment Advice / Sport / Music
7	DON	>50	M	ALL	Bristol	Charity	Timebanking	Therapeutic communities / Prisons / Childrens Play
8	BELINDA	30-50	F	ALL	CHELTENHAM	Council Commissioner	Public Health	Trustee / Leisure / Youth work / Dementia / Music / Sport / Carers
9	STEVE	30-50	M	ALL	CHELTENHAM	Charity	Voluntary and Community Sector Support	IT / Sport
10	ESTHER	<30	F	ALL	GLOUCESTER	Council Officer	Local Government Administration	Womens centre / Independence / Homelessness / Family support
11	HELEN	30-50	F	STROUD	STROUD	Rural Community Council	Advice / Support / Information	Psychotherapy / Childrens Charity
12	JEFF	<30	M	GLOUCESTER	STROUD	Charity	Housing - Support Worker	Town Councillor, Special Constable, Wellbeing
13	ELIZABETH	30-50	F	ALL	STROUD	Charity	Carers	LD / Children / Families
14	FATIMA	30-50	F	ALL	GLOUCESTER	Charity	Advocacy - Minorities and Inequalities	Voluntary and Community Sector support / Childrens Sport
15	LIZZIE	30-50	F	GLOUCESTER	GLOUCESTER	Charity	Youthwork / Residents Association	Carer
16	TINA	>50	F	GLOUCESTER	GLOUCESTER	Charity	Youth Work	Childrens sport
17	RICK	>50	M	FOREST OF DEAN	FOREST OF DEAN	Charity	Advice / Support / Information	Lecturer
18	SUE	>50	M	ALL	CHELTENHAM	Council Officer	Community Engagement	Carer
19	ALAN	30-50	M	FOREST OF DEAN	FOREST OF DEAN	Council Officer	Local Government Management	School Governor / Sport Team Manager / District Community Engagement

### 5.3.3 Key participant cases

The summary list of participants displayed in Table 4, section 5.3.2 was the product of the approach to sampling and inclusion criteria as outlined in sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2. To provide context to the chapters that follow a selection of key biographies are noted below:

#### Lizzie

Lizzie was a project worker, mother and carer, living and working alongside young people on the same urban estate in Gloucestershire for most of her life. Her childhood was not easy, and when she could leave the estate to further her education, she did. When describing where she lived as a child to others, she would use a different description so as not to make it obvious where she was from and avoid ridicule. She referred to painful memories of those from her estate as being perceived or even called 'trash'. Returning to the estate, having caring responsibilities and a desire to give others the opportunities she had, she feels she can't 'let go' of the project. The project is a lifeline of sorts. She knows everyone on the estate and has a sense of pride in that people will look out for each other and help, calling it 'true community'

#### Jeff

Jeff was in the early stages of his career, yet had held a variety of roles, paid and unpaid across Gloucestershire. These included working in housing support with complex clients seeking to recover from difficult situations, in law enforcement, and as a local councillor. He was keen to learn new skills in addition to his postgraduate studies. This creativity around options and learning provided him with a sense of being in control of his own destiny.

His early life had seen a number of changes in terms of personal family circumstances, moving from a middle-class estate to a council estate many miles away. Jeff had strong feelings of social justice, influenced in part by this change in lifestyle but also by his mother. Jeff described a personal transition in outlook, from feeling early in his career that should have it 'all together', be in control, competent and create a strict separation between the person doing the job and their private life. He had also moved between 'hands on' roles and management as his career

has progressed and was currently moving back into more 'hands on' roles whilst completing postgraduate study. He felt this change would make more of a difference - that he could directly see the impact being made.

Jeff talked of there being 'general' community which was a kind of place we all had a right to be part of, but that life events could take us away from it. He believed a key part of recovery was about finding ways to link back into it.

Don

Don held a senior post in a charitable organisation working with large numbers of volunteers across Gloucestershire. He had held a number of roles across his working life, within the prison system and therapeutic communities dealing with mental health, drug and alcohol related issues. He saw himself firstly as a people person rather than a process person. Early childhood experiences of seeing others bullied developed a strong sense of looking out for others and those on the fringe.

His experiences so far had informed his current practise, in that he felt he had a good background of one-to-one work, was empathetic, had a good understanding of people and a real breadth of knowledge.

Don was motivated and inspired by the fact his organisation tried to do everything and anything, based on the needs of others. This gave a sense of the work being quite creative. Such an approach created excitement and offered opportunities as every day there could be different ideas. Whilst these might not all work, it provided the space, freedom and acceptance to talk about them with people they came into contact with. Community for Don was a simple thing, that people felt safe and there was someone you could call on if you needed to.

Tina

Tina was a single mother, project worker and centre manager in Gloucestershire. She had lived and worked in the same area for over 20 years and was member of local groups and forums across a variety of age groups. Community for Tina was about being supportive of each other, because there was often nowhere to go or no one to turn to in life. An extended quotation from Tina and further biographical information is provided in section 7.1.

## 5.4 Interview schedule development

The interview schedule was developed over a period of three months, bringing together the elements of the research aims and goals as agreed with the supervisory team and following the approach as outlined by Smith (2009). This sought to develop interview questions that would elicit descriptive, linguistic and conceptually rich responses from the participants as required by IPA. A further explanation of these response categories is provided in section 5.7.3. Examples of the first draft of the schedule, the version used in the initial interviews and final version are included at Appendix 14. The schedule was also developed in conjunction with a UoG academic colleague experienced in the use of qualitative approaches and harder to reach groups.

### 5.4.1 Initial interviews

As noted above, after the first three interviews which were piloted, amendments and adjustments were made to the schedule and researcher's approach. For example, the introduction to Question 7 was updated to be broader about financial decisions being made by the County Council before noting MTC2 specifically. The running order of Questions 3 and 4 was reversed seeking to discuss positive examples before considering challenges. This it was found helped to improve the flow of the interview.

In addition, interviews were arranged to take place in a variety of settings and not just the main Council headquarters (Shire Hall) or University sites. These were locations suggested by participants as being more familiar and convenient to them. In terms of researcher approach, the reflexive journal explored how the researchers' use of language contained a degree of jargon, a series of assumptions about the positive nature of the research. Participants were not always used to talking about themselves, nor being asked to reflect and describe the meanings and feelings surrounding experiences. There were also wide differences in participant understandings over current policies and intentions of local and national government. More significant perhaps and personally surprising was the reality of significant structural inequalities and perceived discrimination experienced by members of communities in Gloucestershire. These factors provided an important

source of information for refining the interview questions, prompts and interview style, through bracketing and researcher reflection to check assumptions and understanding as the schedule of interviews progressed.

## 5.5 Ethics

As outlined in section 4.5, the research proposal was considered of low risk given the interview participants were over 18, not directly related to vulnerable groups and topics were not deemed to be sensitive.

Whilst approval was sought and gained internally from Gloucestershire County Council as part of their Research Governance Approval process, no formal prior approval was therefore required from the University of Gloucestershire. Any emerging risks would be managed by the supervisory team in its regular schedule of meetings. There were no known risks associated with participation in the research. The final interview letter and consent form examples are included at Appendix 15.

## 5.6 Transcription

All participants were asked if they were happy for the interviews to be recorded as part of the interview process. These were transcribed verbatim, with drafts returned to the participant for accuracy checks prior to agreeing final version.

Participants were made aware of the likelihood that the verbatim text could appear disjointed or less coherent than when in conversation. Whilst there were inherent strengths and weaknesses in the decision to share transcripts for checking (Mero-Jaffe, 2011), this approach was viewed as a means to be transparent and empowering for participants. No participants sought to refine or change existing text, except for aspects of factual accuracy which could be reviewed alongside the recordings. All interviews were then uploaded into NVIVO 10 for management and analysis.

It was suggested that interview transcripts were read multiple times in order to slow down the tendency to complete a “...quick and dirty reduction and synopsis.” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 82). This offered an initial opportunity for an analysis where there are no boundaries over what is commented upon or seen as significant. This approach was relevant given the researcher’s background in policy development

and commissioning, where the requirement is often for immediate summaries or headlines to provide solutions to current problems. Smith then advised to record personal observations and then bracket them off for a period of time. As part of the process the researcher drafted short summary reflections of the interviews, examples of which are included at Appendix 16. These notes summarised the scope of discussion and initial areas of interest stimulated, in part to reflect a “...synergistic process of description and interpretation” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 92).

## 5.7 Transcription notes and data analysis

IPA sought to explore the core account of the participants, the meaning of which should be phenomenological in focus. The participant exploration is “...likely to describe the things that matter to them... and what [relationships, places, events, values] are like...” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 83). No one way however was proposed for initial notes and analysis. For example, it had been suggested that going through the text and underlining that which seemed important, using margins to explain why or describe emerging themes was an alternative to free text noting. These options “...share the fluid process of engaging with the text...pushing the analyses to a more interpretative level” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 91).

### 5.7.1 Individual and cross case analysis

Each individual transcript was subject to multiple listening and readings as part of the transcription and analysis process. Annotations of the hard copy transcripts were made as part of the exploratory noting, with subsequent analysis, searches and coding completed within NVIVO 10 to assist with management of the information. Examples of transcripts in each case are found at Appendix 17, with the table used to summarise themes in more detail. Summaries of themes were made at a number of levels:

1. Simple, short themes following initial analysis – what mattered to each participant
2. Summaries of specific themes as they appeared within the interviews

Whilst moving between transcript parts could be seen as fragmenting the text “...the participant’s experiences through this re-organization of the data.” (Smith et

al., 2009, p. 91), this was argued to be a reflection of the hermeneutic circle where “...the part is interpreted in relation to the whole” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 92).

As noted, summaries of themes and interview question responses (as appearing chronologically) were then grouped across all the cases. An excerpt is provided at Appendix 18. At regular stages these were tabulated and visually represented and regrouped as part of an iterative and interpretative cycle, an example of which are shown at Appendix 19. This sought to explore emerging connections across themes, with key quotes and phrases collected for each participant. These aspects of the process and findings will be considered in more detail within Chapter 7.

#### 5.7.2 Descriptive, linguistic and conceptual notetaking

Smith et al. (2009) offered a number of notation guidelines that could assist the novice IPA researcher following early reviews, as “This involves an analytic shift to working primarily with the initial notes rather than the transcript itself” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 91). These provided a degree of structure towards noting and development of emerging themes.

In the exploratory analysis of transcripts, it was suggested that comments could be noted as descriptive, linguistic or conceptual. Descriptive noting offered an insight into the “...key words, phrases or explanations” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 84) of things that mattered for the participant. Linguistic analysis could reflect upon the language use and how the content and meaning were presented. Smith et al. suggest this analysis could explore pronoun use, repetition or use of metaphor (2009, p. 88). Conceptual notes were argued by Smith et al to be more interpretative, shifting the focus from meanings of individual events to feelings or experience that were common to them all (2009, p. 88). This might often involve a degree of person reflection that ultimately should be stimulated by and linked to the text. Smith et al caution that this uses the researcher to “...help make sense of the participant, not the other way around” (2009, p. 90).

### 5.8 Development of themes

At this stage the analysis moved from the focus on the transcript to the notes, although the notes should be linked closely to the transcript itself.

Managing all the transcripts within NVIVO 10 enabled the text to be arranged into nodes to support with the analysis. An example of the nodal structure is also shown at Appendix 20, along with further iterations of tabular and pictorial representations. Smith et al. suggest a series of approaches to be used when looking for patterns and developing themes:

1. Abstraction: Where emergent themes are grouped together to create a new overarching, super-ordinate theme
2. Subsumption: similar to abstraction, but where an existing theme is given overarching or super-ordinate status
3. Polarisation: Themes arise from oppositional relationships rather than their similarity
4. Contextualisation: Themes organised around moments in time or life events
5. Numeration: the frequency with which themes appears within the transcript
6. Function: The specific function of themes within the transcript, for example the positive or negative presentation of people or events

How the researcher approached these aspects in the development of themes will be explored further in Chapter 7.

## 5.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the relevance of the approach taken in the use of IPA, the focus on individual experience and its importance for community development. Analysing and critically evaluating the conceptual complexities of community, empowerment and resilience and their role in the development of communities in Gloucestershire during a period of austerity, were key aims of the research. This chapter has built upon the rationale for the selection of IPA and relationship to the study as outlined in sections 3.3.4 and 3.9. Ethical considerations have been noted, and the interview process from participant selection through to the initial transcription and analysis of information has been described. These steps were fundamental in generating the basis of IPA findings to be outlined in Chapter 7. The findings were analysed and interpreted to form the basis of a series of themes. These themes described and explored participant understandings of community empowerment and resilience.

## Chapter 6 - Exploring the collective story and discourse around resilient and empowered communities

### 6.1 Introduction

The approach to Discourse Analysis drew on the work of Dunn and Neumann (2016), recognising there was no single way to undertake an analysis, or version of it (Bryman, 2004). Definitions of what discourse was could also vary, however as noted in section 4.2.1 Jørgensen & Phillips suggested that a useful starting place was to consider a discourse as “...a particular way of talking about and understanding the world” (2002, p. 1).

Having outlined in the approach towards the selection of twenty-three texts for analysis in Chapter 4, section 4.4, this chapter will proceed to explore ‘Change’ within the texts. The chapter and its location within the wider thesis are displayed at Appendix 21. This will consider the developments, appearance or disappearance of elements over time in the collective story of community, empowerment and resilience. Given these concepts were defined and understood in a variety of ways, often used in place of each other and with ambiguous meanings, the categorisations could create a false set of distinctions and boundaries. This had implications for the interpretation of findings and eventual conclusions.

These challenges of definition within the discourse were not just restricted to the main concepts. It was noted within the texts that supporting concepts such as integration were seen as “...nebulous” (Casey, 2016, p. 19), or that commissioners could “...fail to reach beyond a narrow definition of diversity or a belief that there is a one-size solution...” (Department of Health, NHS England, Public Health England, & VCSE sector representatives, 2016, p. 17).

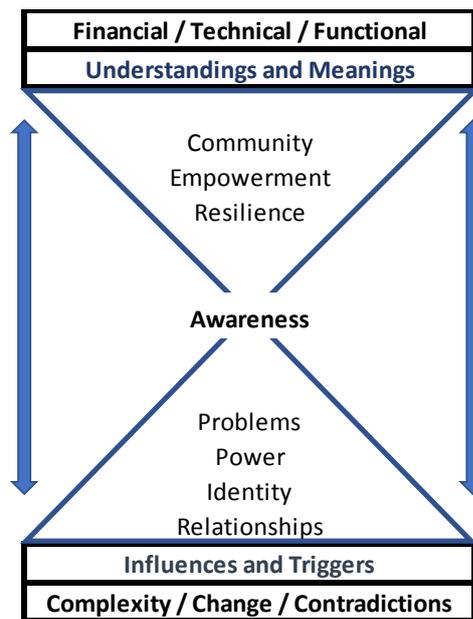
As the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) noted:

Empowerment, as the word suggests, refers to the act of increasing the amount of power available to individuals or groups. But defining what this

'power' being conferred actually is... is a rather more complex task... A full conception of empowerment therefore demands engagement with both the internal and external dimensions of human activity. (2015)

Therefore, this chapter explores the context of complexity, change and contradictions which could be seen to influence and trigger responses or practices supported from the texts. The key concepts however, were understood and described in a primarily functional and financial sense. The main re-presentations and layers within the 'expert' and 'official' discourse were analysed, exploring the dominant voices and understandings across the themes. These were conceptualised as Problems, Power, Identity and Relationships. This helped to create an awareness of the discourse, and that which it sought to communicate and achieve. A diagrammatic summary of the context is shown in figure 7.

**Figure 7: Summary of Discourse Analysis context**



The texts when organised in a chronological grouping began and ended with two speeches from UK Prime Ministers, David Cameron in 2010 and Theresa May in 2017. Both described missions to create 'Big' or 'Shared' societies and were significant moments of change in the discourse. Both leaders of the government reflected upon the problems perceived as facing communities and highlighted the need for power to be redistributed or injustices addressed. This action would help

bring about positive change, rather than a continuation of the status quo. They outlined the type of society that their governments and people of Britain might wish to see, in terms of identity and relationships between individuals and the state. Both signalled reform, and outlined intentions for delivery of societal benefits away from “...Whitehall elites” (Cameron, 2010) or “...a privileged few” (May, 2017a) to the British people. Both offered explanations for the extent of progress made to address the problems as described and offered criteria for future success.

The initial analysis explored the key assumptions or presupposition surrounding the context of a ‘crisis’ facing communities. These were described across the texts as financial, system, care, perpetual and existential crises, amongst others. The situation to be faced was new or imminent, requiring a new response positioned alongside specific pressures. These included the challenges of an ageing population, reduction in public sector budgets or undesired or unanticipated behaviours within society. These could include problems caused by young people or divisions and resentments between rich and poor generations.

At particular points, often in response to external events or following the publication of a review or report, the narrative focus could move from a general discussion to the identification of specific groups. These groups could be identified and linked to issues of immigration, terrorism or social justice, or those in certain roles playing to another set of rules, for example politicians, bankers or journalists in the media.

The ‘think tank’ Civil Exchange noted in their review of the Big Society, that the initiative was the latest output in a long running consensus over the need to work with communities, and the primacy of the market:

...its characteristics [The Big Society] are built on foundations laid by previous governments, including Tony Blair’s Third Way. Whilst the Big Society initiative has many critics, all political parties are continuing to look for ways to unlock potential within society beyond the state and the markets. (2015, p. 6)

This was not without challenge given the difficulties in ascribing wider wellbeing from society or social contacts, or the consequences, positive or otherwise, of seeking to unlock potential. At the same time, charities such as the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, argued that social relationships were central to maintaining wider wellbeing. This they believed was unquestioned, although perhaps contradictorily based on a “...broad consensus...” (2015, p. 51).

Groups were invariably described in one of two ways. Firstly, as resilient or empowered, yet with the capacity to do or be more. Therefore, community could be predicated with a variety of terms that suggested this. For example, they would or should exhibit more of the actions that could help make communities, groups or societies stronger, safer, confident or active. These qualities shaped the definition of the types of empowerment and resilience that was expected or valued. This also assumed that communities would wish to exhibit these qualities as a priority, whether directed or nudged, to follow the agenda and address the problems outlined by the state.

There were also groups described in terms of vulnerability, frailty or need, implying the requirement of help, support or priority for action. For either description, the need for future action regarding each group was positioned with the expectation of a threat to current stability. This was often articulated as affecting the longer-term health, wellbeing or safety of a community or society if those receiving the policy or instruction did not act or respond in the way proscribed. Therefore, each group was required to understand the message, follow the logic for responding to imminent threats which would then develop its empowerment and resilience.

#### 6.1.1 Key influences on the discourse

There were three main areas of influence on the discourse within the selected texts. These were the use of definitions, the focus on the ‘new’, and financial terminology. Each shaped the way in which the four themes framed the understandings of community, empowerment and resilience.

6.1.2 The use of definitions: A discourse of common good and common sense  
A striking feature of the documents selected for Discourse Analysis was that there were very few direct definitions of community, empowerment or resilience. These definitions are summarised at Appendix 22. The only text within the group to directly define all three was the Public Health England guide to community centred approaches.

Even the Public Health England guide however, offered a definition of community so broad, that it would have seemed hard to exclude much from it:

Unless otherwise stated, this report uses the NICE [The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence] definition of community as an umbrella term, to cover groups of people sharing a common characteristic or affinity, such as living in a neighbourhood, or being in a specific population group, or sharing a common faith or set of experiences. (Public Health England, 2015, p. 7)

More frequently they were used as pre-supposed understandings of positive growth along with subject positioning to frame a discussion:

Like Helen [Government Champion for Safer, Active Communities], we strongly believe that by backing citizens and communities across the country, we can continue to grow a bigger, more active, safer society.

(Newlove, 2012, p. 1)

Therefore, the assumption could be interpreted that empowered communities needed to be supported by government, which would in turn have positive outcomes. Although being backed by one party did not necessarily imply a joint relationship, the resulting outcomes would be expected to demonstrate increased growth and scale. Therefore, it was assumed additional capacity was available, and positioned communities in relationship to the specific things it should deliver more of, or be, such as being active and safe.

Where definitions of empowerment were used, they focussed on being involved and having control, such as noted in the Civil Exchange review of the Big Society:

...[Community empowerment] described by the Government as 'local people taking control of how things are done in their area and being helped to do so by local government and others...' (2015)

Resilience had a much wider range of uses, linked to personal characteristics to "...avoid burnout of community leaders" (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, 2015, p. 34) , the maintenance of health and wellbeing functioning of the system to provide care and support (Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016) and the management of emergencies, stress and challenge (Action with Communities in Rural England, 2015; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015). The meaning attached to definitions from the participant perspective is considered further in section 7.3 and both sets of findings discussed in section 8.2.2. These reflect on the extent to which the deliberate use of a variety definitions and resultant ambiguities supported continued imbalances in power relations and created challenges of clarity and practice for participants.

#### 6.1.3 The use of 'new': A discourse of transformation

The second influence on the discourse was the repetition and regular appearance of 'new' as an adjective. This use was most visible, when linked to responses surrounding external or wider perceived societal changes, marking a key moment in time. Whilst references were made to problems or issues being longstanding, there was an overwhelming focus on the presupposition of the period being a new one, rather than a renewal or reinvention of previous situations. This usage covered all of the four themes, describing a whole range of 'new' characteristics or activities. For example, new relationships, deals, partnerships, frameworks, models, generations, skills, roles, rights, powers, funding, faith schools, housing developments and connections. This list was a fraction of those included within the texts and used to denote transformative intentions and expectations.

In marking key moments in time, 'reform' was used by both Prime Ministers at the beginning and end of the period of analysis and was also used by the previous Labour Party leader Ed Miliband. Reform appeared in the subsequent government texts around devolution, decentralism and localism following the Big Society speech (Cabinet Office, 2014; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010, 2011). However, it remained largely absent from the other texts during the period. Instead 'transform' or transformation was more regularly used in between these points, which arguably suggested a less critical view of historic action, given its focus on the shift between current problems to future initiatives.

The use of 'new' or phrases such as the "...rapidly changing times" (Action with Communities in Rural England, 2015, p. 21) were therefore often linked to arguments for transformation or change. The changing times however, were also used as a cause for concern.

For example, the UK Prime Minister, Theresa May explained:

...They saw their community changing but didn't remember being consulted – or agreeing to – that change. They looked at the changing world – the onset of globalisation and the advances in technology – and worried about what the future held for their children and grandchildren. (May, 2017a)

However, within the same speech the Prime Minister specifically highlighted she was not arguing against globalisation and its benefits, nor government support of free markets. This narrative of change and uncertainty was not concentrated within one political party. Ed Miliband reflected that "...as the world has changed, politics has to change with it" (2013). Other texts were more specific about the nature of the changes "...Technology has, of course, changed everything in terms of the ease and speed at which information can be got out there" (Newlove, 2012, p. 34). The Five Year Forward View added a further layer of complexity, proposing that "...Our values haven't changed, but our world has" (NHS England, 2014, p. 2).

The development of this narrative could create the requirement for a specific response to the changes and uncertainty. Using ambiguities and contradictions

could reinforce this position and close off alternative options, potential evaluation or challenge over the efficacy of previous activities. This could shift personal or corporate responsibility elsewhere, away from government given the links to external factors, concepts, or other groups being the causes of the problem. Proposed solutions might therefore come to an incorrect or partial conclusion, whilst also retaining the power and control over future recommendations.

Some groups, such as the Local Government Association explicitly sought to avoid this consideration of the past:

All too often, every conversation about the future is framed by notions of the past. What we need is to do is sweep away old practices and preconceived ideas about how services are delivered and recognise that people's aspirations and lives have changed and the system needs to change with them. (2016)

The problems faced therefore were often predicated and articulated as being 'unprecedented', for example in terms of central control (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010), changes and rising demand (Gloucestershire County Council, 2015b), demographics and austerity (Local Government Association, 2016) and population changes linked to levels of migration (Casey, 2016).

Such uses could further reinforce the context of uncertainties and change. This could provide a rationale and justifications for financial, functional and technical actions, for example the need for management controls and structures to mitigate and manage risks.

#### 6.1.4 The use of financial terminology: A discourse of acquisition

The final area of influence concerned the use of financial language. As with the preoccupation of things 'new', words such as value, costs, assets, savings, budgets, resources, demand, capacity, market, growth and stock were used across the texts. This again only represented a fraction of the examples.

David Cameron outlined his intentions for the 'Big Society' speech early in the tenure of the UK coalition government:

It's my hope - and my mission - that when people look back ...they'll say: 'In Britain they didn't just pay down the deficit, they didn't just balance the books, they didn't just get the economy moving again, they did something really exciting in their society.' Whether it is in building affordable housing, tackling youth unemployment, inviting charities to deliver public services.....the people in Britain worked out the answer to the big social problems. (2010)

This excerpt used "they didn't just..." positioned directly in front of the deficit, the books and the economy, which left them open to interpretation in terms of whether they were being described as difficult or simple to achieve. However interpreted, cutting the deficit was noted as a first duty of government, even if unpopular. The primacy of the economy and competent financial management was assumed as a pre-requisite from which the people of Britain would judge government success or failure. The exciting things, defined as housing, employment and a diversification of service delivery are set between the construction of the problems and the answers. No specifics were given on how many houses might be built, but sections of the population are identified in terms of young people and employment.

The various texts illustrated the influence of financial language on Community Development as a discipline, highlighting the various 'asset-based' approaches or the utilisation of social 'capital' to conceptualise and explore aspects of development work. For example, programmes were commissioned to explore how "...health and care takes full account of value, as it is experienced and created by people and communities" (Realising the value consortium, 2016a, p. 4).

The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) also used a combination of financial terms in explaining the outcomes of their project looking at the value of connected communities:

...Our evaluation of [interventions] reveals that investing in community capital in this way produces a range of benefits, which we draw together as four kinds of social value: a wellbeing dividend, a citizenship dividend, a capacity dividend, and an economic dividend. (2015, p. 48)

The influence of financial language and understanding had also filtered through to the joint review of partnerships in the voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in the health and care sector:

Goals such as wellbeing, strong communities and resilience cannot be easily procured: they require collaborative planning and commissioning, with the VCSE sector able to feed community voices and expertise into the shaping of health and care systems. (Department of Health et al., 2016)

Therefore, communities had a desired role to assist in finding efficiencies, savings, to be invested in, releasing value or a resulting dividend of some description. Identification of assets and recognition of social capital provided the framework for this approach. This could be interpreted as a sense of the key concepts, such as communities being perceived as commodities, able to be acquired given the right management conditions. These influences had a bearing therefore on understanding the purpose of communities, their identity and relationship to the state. This could also frame the way in which empowerment and resilience would be defined.

## 6.2 Construction of the four overarching themes

Texts were uploaded into NVIVO 10 for management, organised and analysed around the four emerging themes of problems, power, identity and relationships emerged. The conceptual themes and subthemes were categorised, yet it remained

possible for them to be relevant across more than one area. Table 5 provides a tabular summary of the structure:

**Table 5: Summary of the four overarching themes and subthemes**

Themes re Communities / Empowerment / Resilience	Conceptual Themes	Conceptual Detail / Subtheme
Relationships with communities	<b>PROBLEMS</b>	Extent of change
Helping communities help themselves		
Tension between prioritising statutory duties for greatest needs and investing in services / communities that prevent / reduce future demand		Extent of pressure
Culture change		Complexity of process and administration
Place based planning for local communities		Complexity of the system
STPs - engagement with community partners		
Assessing value in health and care, as it is experienced and created by people and communities		Complexity of people and communities
The impact of everyday relationships and kindness on individual and societal wellbeing		
Community Cohesion		Complexity of problems
Not just value of individual rights but focus on responsibilities to one another		
Exclusion from social and political discourse		
From Big Government to Big Society	<b>POWER</b>	Barriers to the dispersal of power
Open up government to public scrutiny		
Power shift from Government to Communities and Individuals		
Transfer of powers from central government to local communities in England	The rationale for dispersing power	
Getting public servants out into the community	<b>IDENTITY</b>	The characteristics that are required
Confident communities		The rationale for the characteristics
Communities as building blocks for health		
Communities and social capital		
Supporting communities to take action themselves		
Developing local solutions to meet local needs		
The NHS as a social movement	<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b>	A diverse and complex relationship
Living well at home as part of welcoming, inclusive communities		
Release the full potential of communities.		
Below the radar groups		
Using the strengths of individuals, carers and local communities, to transform the quality of care and support		A joint relationship
Connected communities		
Realising social value from community capital		
Enabling Active Communities – building a new sense of personal responsibility and promoting independence for health		

As the analysis progressed, texts were arranged chronologically and managed for the purposes of analysis within NVIVO 10. Key quotes from the texts and areas of relevance to the research as stated within them were included to assist in allocating primary themes. A key quote was included to assist with grouping, and then texts reorganised thematically. Excerpts outlining an example of this process are included at Appendix 23 and 24. Additional quotes and researcher annotations were then included as overarching and subthemes were developed. The full breakdown of each of the four themes is included at Appendix 25. As with the IPA, the analytic process moved through the texts from the individual to the group, from the sentence to the whole text, from the word or quote to the theme, and back again.

The influences on the discourse therefore provided the context within which the themes were developed each with its own lens for looking at community, empowerment and resilience. These findings from the Discourse Analysis will be discussed alongside the findings from the semi structured interviews utilising IPA in Chapter 8.

### 6.3 Theme 1: Problems

The problems for communities were argued within the texts as being influenced by the context of a complex and changing world, alongside a number of financial and demographic pressures facing the system. The period of analysis began with the creation of a coalition government, the first full coalition government since 1945. The Big Society speech argued the lack of societal progress was due to the political system, specifically previous central government control.

David Cameron explained:

For years, there was the basic assumption at the heart of government that the way to improve things in society was to micromanage from the centre, from Westminster. But this just doesn't work...It's about holding our hands up saying we haven't got all the answers - let's work them out, together (2010).

The assumption therefore was that at the heart of central government, the “...elites in Whitehall” (Cameron, 2010) had negatively affected the way the system functioned. The main problem presented was to fix the financial problems facing the country, which had arisen in part due to prior lack of regulation, management and control of the financial sector. However, government micro-management was now described as the problem. The use of place by citing Whitehall and Westminster, rather than any specific individual or political party also suggested this issue of control was a wider problem across the civil service, legislature and executive. As with the articulation of an uncertain and contradictory context, these approaches and ambiguities using place or groups avoided highlighting specific individuals as accountable. This was to some extent contradictory when compared to intentions to create Police and Crime Commissioners and Metro Mayors where it was argued “...People will know...where the buck stops” (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011, p. 6).

#### 6.3.1 The extent of changes and pressures

During the period of analysis, the problems of government control and management from Whitehall or Westminster became less visible or regularly represented. There were other areas of interest to government that therefore required involvement and direction. The problems were in another place, for example out in communities. Problems were linked to a requirement for others to also get involved. Communities contained vulnerable or frail people within them and were complex. Empowerment therefore was used as an explanation for the push to offer independence and resilience was explained as part of the need to create a sustainable future. The need to act was often framed as a ‘step’, or within the health led texts as a ‘step-change’ (Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016; NHS England, 2015). But ultimately the use of this verb denoted an action required. This by implication suggested it was not something that individuals or communities were currently delivering to the required extent.

For example, the 2015 Conservative Party manifesto explained that:

...Of course, there are many tasks which require the resources and grip of government. But there are also many areas of national life in which we need

more people to step forward, take responsibility and play their part. This is about a national culture change, saying to everyone in Britain: ask what you can do for your community and your country... (2015, p. 45)

Locally in Gloucestershire similar themes were communicated, with implications for communities to change their behaviour, this would avoid making requests where there wasn't funding, or evidence for extra provision or need.

For example, from the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board, Joint Enabling Active Communities policy:

[creating a knowledgeable community should] ...Help in the ongoing process of identifying issues where the community could 'step up' or where there is a real need for additional statutory services. (2015a, p. 6)

Therefore, as the period of analysis progressed, the focus back towards the requirements for Government input and control had become more visible. It appeared as a time to signal another major change in the way government functioned. The language of economics remained, as did the focus on the vulnerable. However, the use of 'step' had altered in emphasis and in terms of its positioning. Now the focus was on governmental rather than community action, therefore the relationship between the two was changing.

Theresa May stated in this respect:

This means a government rooted not in the laissez-faire liberalism that leaves people to get by on their own, but rather in a new philosophy that means government stepping up – not just in the traditional way of providing a welfare state to support the most vulnerable, as vital as that will always be...It means making a significant shift in the way that government works in Britain. (2017a)

The solutions or desired future states however were less defined, being described for example in this case a 'new' philosophy. This philosophy was non-traditional and suggested a change in the way government had operated, compared to the past. This could present challenges in understanding the meaning of empowerment and resilience in the light of this new approach.

### 6.3.2 Complexity of the system and people

During the period of analysis, a wide variety of problems were noted across the texts to be addressed by the system and linked to specific groups, for example problem drinkers, immigrants, faith groups, young people, and those with mental health problems. Providing a list of problems offered a deficit-based context in which empowerment and resilience as concepts would be positioned. The system through its complex structure and functions was argued to provide the means through which the problems would be addressed, with groups becoming empowered and resilient.

However, as NHS England recognised this was a complicated environment:

...[Transformation] footprints should be locally defined, based on natural communities, existing working relationships, patient flows and take account of the scale needed to deliver the services, transformation and public health programmes required, and how it best fits with other footprints...In future years we will be open to simplifying some of these arrangements. (2015)

Whilst there was recognition of the complexity, the main offer was that at some unspecified point in the future, some, but not all of the elements could be simplified. This however was no guarantee, with NHS England only offering to be open to the possibility. This suggested a need to retain control the process of transformation, however defined or interpreted. This complexity and contrast in the differences between government specification of problems or solutions was recognised by Theresa May:

...there are not easy answers to these [inequalities of race, class, gender] problems, but it is vital that we come together to address them. For they

are all burning injustices that undermine the solidarity of our society and stunt our capacity to build the stronger, fairer country that we want Britain to be... Governments have traditionally been good at identifying – if not always addressing – such problems. (2017a)

This proposed a shared response to the problems, and as with the Big Society linked this characteristic to strength and capacity. There was however a shift in emphasis. Whilst both the Big and Shared societies identified the importance of strengths, the former was framed in the context of personal freedom and power, potentially more closely linked to the ideas of laissez-faire liberalism and individualism over collective concerns.

As David Cameron explained:

The Big Society is about a huge culture change, where people, in their everyday lives, in their homes, in their neighbourhoods, in their workplace don't always turn to officials, local authorities or central government for answers to the problems they face but instead feel both free and powerful enough to help themselves and their own communities. (2010)

Previous considerations of government control and personal freedoms were developed and linked to sections of society being active, to help themselves, becoming empowered or resilient in finding answers to the problems or opportunities. This by implication suggested that government was therefore required to do less. Whilst exactly who would step forward, where and when was not always clear, and the assumption was they would and would always have the means to do so. That communities could be independent in this way and not needing to turn to local officials or any arm of government reinforced the assumption of a deficit nature of their relationship. This also implied that community problems were potentially unrelated to the operation of the system. Whether individuals were perceived as empowered or supported by the government, raised considerations over the real extent of access or barriers to

power, along with the actual rationale for its dispersal.

## 6.4 Theme 2: Power

The period for analysis began and ended with a clear articulation of the UK government's role in terms of a series of changes potentially altering the power relations with communities. The 'Big Society' was to be "...the biggest, most dramatic redistribution of power..." (Cameron, 2010). This intention provided the context for how powers would or could be given away. They were needed by other groups not just government, to enable independence. This independence was articulated in a number of ways including devolution, control of services down to individual health and wellbeing (Cabinet Office, 2014; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011; NHS England, 2014).

### 6.4.1 Barriers to the dispersal of power

Government management was argued to be inefficient, having a nature seeking to seize control, which meant therefore that power should be redistributed and dispersed to 'enable' communities.

As the plain English guide to the Localism Act described:

We [the Government] think that the best means of strengthening society is not for central government to try and seize all the power and responsibility for itself. It is to help people and their locally elected representatives to achieve their own ambitions. This is the essence of the Big Society. (2011)

Alongside this, a number of references were made to 'vested' interests (Cameron, 2010; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010; Miliband, 2013) although who would also wish to maintain the status quo was unspecified. The changes to power had implications for communities given the intentions outlined in texts focussed on localism and decentralisation. For example, these used an idiom needing to "...turn government completely on its head..." (Cameron, 2010), or "...by turning government upside down our aim is to make Whitehall the ally and not the antagonist of local control..." (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010, p. 7).

This idea was then developed and linked to a range of opportunities afforded by the change in power relations, such as in the plain English guide to the Localism Act:

The Government has turned this assumption [Local Authorities acting within the law] upside down. Instead of being able to act only where the law says they can, local authorities will be freed to do anything - provided they do not break other laws. (2011)

This contained a series of assumptions; for example, that Local Authorities did not currently do anything other than that specifically prescribed by law, and therefore in a similar way to the expectations placed on communities, could similarly do more. Also, it simplified the position by suggesting that current legislation did not provide a degree of discretion over how to act, and that no opportunity for interpretation existed in local government.

In addition to the inference of vested interests, five barriers to dispersing power and bringing change were articulated by the DCLG in their guide to decentralisation:

... the Coalition will encounter resistance from those who benefit – or think they benefit – from the status quo. It is important that the key objections to decentralisation are understood and answered: Decentralisation is just a longer word for cuts, Local people are incapable of managing public resources, Nimby [Not in my back yard]’s will take over and stop all new development, Reducing central control will increase the risk of failure, [and] Local control will result in a postcode lottery (2010)

The DCLG guide also reflected that “...with a long history of using power to gain even more power, some might argue it is not in the nature of central government to give it away” (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010, p. 5). Significantly, four of the five barriers were positioned as deficiencies or risks that rested outside of central government. These could be argued to have sat with local government or communities. This shifted the context for the discussion, again

implying some need outside of Whitehall and within communities, and therefore to shape or direct areas to become empowered and resilient. This could have been viewed as another means to signal the reassertion of deficiency or for government to reassert control if required.

#### 6.4.2 The rationale for dispersing power

Dispersing power would provide the means to respond and deliver change, enabling communities to adapt and respond to the various problems facing society. Empowerment within this context was initially seen as everyone playing their part, working together to support the aims of the Big Society and localism, becoming engaged and increasingly involved. Resilience concerned the extent of control individuals and communities had, their capacity available to take the opportunities offered and deliver the proposed changes at a personal or local level.

However, whilst central government was described as having too much power, what it had seized, by whom and to what benefit was not as clearly articulated. Therefore, communicating the desire to give control or offer a dramatic redistribution of power could have a wide range of interpretations and expectations.

Theresa May the UK Prime Minister as at the time of writing, offered her reflections on the state of civil society in Britain:

People are questioning whether the system of globalisation, free markets and free trade – one that has underpinned so much of our prosperity – is actually working for them. When they lose their jobs, or their wages stagnate, or their dreams such as owning a home seem out of reach, they feel it is even working against them – serving not their interests or ambitions, but those of a privileged few.(2017a)

As with the themes within the Big Society speech, the recognition or acceptance of the economic system based on free markets and trade was positioned first and given pre-eminence. This was then linked to delivering employment and home ownership as a desired end state. Therefore a series of calls to “...arms” (Cameron,

2010) or “...action” (Department of Health et al., 2016; Realising the value consortium, 2016a) were made. The calls required a specific set of characteristics in order to deliver, which raised considerations of identity and its relevance to empowerment and resilience.

### 6.5 Theme 3: Identity

In conjunction with the identification of problems, culture change and the need to utilise power in a different way, the period began with optimism noting the need for “...forward-thinking, entrepreneurial, community-minded people and neighbourhoods...” (Cameron, 2010). These were the types of people and places which could step forward and play their part in the Big Society. Using entrepreneurship maintained a financial or economic link which also had the sense of invention or innovation as entrepreneurs are often assumed to create new businesses.

Community was regularly positioned around place or space, often predicated as local. Buildings and space were described as being of significance for integration (Casey, 2016) or for making connections (Carnegie Trust & Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016; Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, 2015). Pooled budgets or place based approaches to systems or the understanding of commissioning across populations were communicated as an aim (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010; Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016; Local Government Association, 2016; NHS England, 2015). Empowerment and resilience in this context were described in functional or technical ways, for example using building, construction or creation related descriptions and metaphors. These drew on the various required characteristics and outcomes. The use of this approach implied again that characteristics were not present and the need for other functions to be provided or requiring management. For example, commitments to build community, empowerment and resilience were positioned with structured conversations, activities (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, 2015), the underpinning of opportunity, collaboration, governance (Action with Communities in Rural England, 2015; Cabinet Office, 2014; Casey,

2016; Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016) or concrete actions (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010; Newlove, 2012).

The Carnegie Trust explained that in respect of community empowerment:

Evidence indicates that strong connections, interactions and relationships between individuals in the community are pre-requisites for community empowerment. If these factors are limited in 'cold spot' areas it will be important that the approach takes time to help develop these foundations, rather than moving too quickly to organising to effect change. (2016)

As with much of the discourse, identity, empowerment and resilience were linked to the sense of newness or change, in that these characteristics were suggested to be linked to the future and the ideal state. This was somewhere 'forward' or ahead from the position communities found themselves in, and by implication the current position had a degree of deficit or need justifying interventions.

#### 6.5.1 The required characteristics

Whilst aspirational or hopeful language was used, communities were regularly described negatively in terms of key characteristics or what they had been perceived to have become, for example '...dull, soulless clones' (Cameron, 2010), isolated (Action with Communities in Rural England, 2015; Casey, 2016; Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group & Gloucestershire County Council, 2016; Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, 2015) or deprived (Newlove, 2012; NHS England, 2014; Public Health England, 2015).

The main re-presentations in the discourse therefore considered the types of identity that were required to support functions or service delivery, or characteristics that needed to change. This change would result in desired outcomes being realised. The rationale outlining what individuals and communities were or could become was communicated, with less of an emphasis, on understanding the process or meaning of experiences linking these two states.

6.5.1.1 The required characteristics: Relationship with empowerment and resilience  
As the Joseph Rowntree Foundation noted as part of their work on kinder communities and empowerment:

Elements of existing approaches may be important in encouraging kinder communities but tend to jump forward to community empowerment in purpose rather than considering the strength of the community in looking after one another as an outcome or foundation in its own right. (2015)

Similarly, for resilience the assumption was that what was required was to diagnose the problem and prescribe a technical solution, for those groups that were ailing. This would be sufficient with the action making a change that would deliver the expected results. For example, the NHS approach to population health and wellbeing would be based on “...engaging with ‘activated’ individuals and communities” (Realising the value consortium, 2016a, p. 6). Activation was used to describe the knowledge and confidence for individuals and groups to manage their own health.

Dame Louise Casey described the concept of resilience in terms akin to a commodity or medicine to be imparted or administered by another which could alter the identity of communities:

I approached this task [the review into integration and opportunity in isolated and deprived communities] hoping that by improving integration and the life chances of some of the most disadvantaged and isolated communities, we could also inject some resilience against those who try to divide us with their extremism and hate. (2016)

6.5.1.2 The required characteristics: Relationship with strength and self  
The notion of strength was an important re-presentation for shaping the rationale for the characteristics required. The assumption was that “...strong communities, wellbeing and resilience are key areas where local government can take evidence-based actions” (King's Fund 2013, cited by Public Health England, 2015, p. 14).

Communities were described and predicated by being strong or having strength. This was regularly re-presented and linked to 'strengthening' evidence, leadership, bonds, relationships or communities. This use could be positioned alongside reflections over the nature of society or hopes for the future, for example "...the stronger, fairer country that we want Britain to be" (May, 2017b) or that "...strong confident communities are the way that you build a strong confident nation" (Miliband, 2013).

The sense of self was an important aspect in understanding identity. Within the texts, the use of self was linked to independence and action, for individuals, groups and organisations. For example, self-management, care and help were regularly employed as expectations. More active uses included self-service, referral and advocacy. Ultimately the outcomes for individuals and organisations were to be self-sufficient, self-funders or achieve a degree of self-improvement. This provided a further functional and financial backdrop for the purpose and understanding of empowerment and resilience in the discourse.

#### 6.5.1.3 The required characteristics: Relationship with deficiencies

As noted, approaches assumed there were pre-existing deficiencies or lack of desired characteristics, not present within communities. Communities could or should be safer (Barnwood Trust, 2015; Gloucestershire County Council, 2015b; Newlove, 2012), stronger, healthier (Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016; Public Health England, 2015) or kinder (Carnegie Trust & Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016). Actions would have a resulting outcome of creating active, confident (Newlove, 2011a, 2012) and connected (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, 2015) communities. These descriptions created a potentially simplistic distinction to the empowered or resilient states communities might find themselves within or without.

This contrast between the re-presentations and positioning of positive and negative characteristics could also be seen in the imagery used within the texts selected for analysis. For example, the front cover of the GCC MTC2 strategy is shown in Figure 8 below:

**Figure 8: MTC 2 Strategy Front Cover**



Taken from: Meeting the Challenge 2 Together We Can Gloucestershire County Council's Strategy 2015-18

The image above displayed the polarisation or arguably simplistic and binary distinctions regularly employed. Both individuals are men, with one seemingly empowered and resilient and another is not. This could frame the discourse, defining roles, expectations and responsibilities. For example, there was a problem not under control, interpreted as the rain. There were those who had the power, which could be the person with the umbrella. There was a type of identity specified, this being a working person illustrated with a tie. This person was arguably active, confident and connected as they were not currently engaged in their work but have taken the initiative to hold the umbrella up and appeared to be talking to the other person, perhaps someone they knew. The other person is older, having less hair, wrinkled, wearing glasses and are frail, needing a walking stick. The older person was not talking, and the nature of the relationship is one of accepting another's help. The situation was a wholly positive action and had joint agreement, given both were smiling. This usage on the front of the GCC strategy suggested a shared understanding of the relationship between the state and communities. This continued the link between directing action at those defined as in need or requiring support from services.

### 6.5.2 The rationale for the characteristics

The key concepts were also predicated and positioned to create a sense of moral obligation or need to be engaged in a battle as part of the rationale. These appeared across the texts describing trust in individuals or organisations, belief in solutions or types of spirit demonstrated by communities in responses to challenging events. Whilst these descriptions could be positive or optimistic, they were also functional in their feel. A series of military and religious descriptions and metaphors were again used, often with a degree of ambiguity to reinforce a particular view of society, a mission to be undertaken, behaviours or identities to develop the line of argument. For example it was argued that “...Society’ cannot be driven by government alone but must engage wider social forces more collaboratively” (Civil Exchange, 2015, p. 61). Issues such as poverty needed to be fought, or action taken to “...break down suspicion and build trust” (Casey, 2016, p. 127). Task forces would be set up, with laws subsequently coming into force.

As Baroness Newlove explained in the report on active and safer communities:

The ‘fight back spirit’ is clear from the evidence I have seen in preparing this report. The day after the riots something wonderful began to happen.

Quiet, law-abiding citizens everywhere organised themselves through social networking into ‘broom armies’ and marched as one to reclaim their streets. (2012)

This linked the sense of a ‘spirit’ as supportive in terms of acceptable evidence, and defined characteristics of desired and undesired behaviour from citizens. Multiple uses of words with military connotations were used to enhance the metaphor of fighting back against social disorder. This language of action to challenge the status quo or of criticism was relatively absent from the texts, apart from significant points where wider events had played into the discourse.

For example, in January 2017, following the EU ‘Brexit’ referendum of June 2016 and general election to be called in April 2017, Theresa May explained:

Politicians who embraced the twin pillars of liberalism and globalisation as the great forces for good that they are, but failed to understand that for too many people...those forces are something to be concerned, not thrilled, about...However, the mission I have laid out for the government – to make Britain a country that works for everyone and not just the privileged few – goes further. It means more than fighting these obvious injustices. (May, 2017a)

Where the word justice was employed elsewhere within the discourse, it was more commonly used in the context of the criminal justice system rather than as an action or outcome in itself. 'Critical' was commonly used to denote importance or prioritisation, rather than as a relational approach or attitude. Even where texts were critical of the government agenda, the solutions restated existing government objectives from the Big Society.

For example, Civil Exchange in their review of the Big Society explained:

...despite some genuinely positive initiatives, the Big Society has failed to deliver against its original goals. Attempts to create more social action, to empower communities and to open up public services, with some positive exceptions, have not worked. The Big Society has not reached those who need it most. We are more divided than before. (2015)

However, in articulating what would make a better Big Society, Civil Exchange suggested collaboration, power sharing and devolution, targeting areas of need and business engagement. These were things already listed in the original coalition government decentralisation agenda. In addition, they also recommended the setting up of a commission, formal mechanisms for dialogue, a review of public sector commissioning and contracting, and holding a summit on the role of the private sector. All of which appeared to be functional, being process or managerial

recommendations rather than addressing their conclusions over social action and division. Developing the strong connections and building the foundations leads to the final theme of relationships.

## 6.6 Relationships

The area of relationships focussed on the re-presentations of connections, collaboration and integration as efficient solutions to the problems. This also highlighted the complexity of the system and the extent to which technical language was used between individuals and organisations.

Relationships would provide the basis for a series of functional or technical changes, such as joint commissioning or reviews. The creation of a new organisation, such as a combined authority, new partnerships, for example STPs between the NHS and Local Authorities were used to legitimise or offer increased credibility or authority to the relationship and their proposals. These again were not necessarily clearly defined as to their rationale for creation, with financial efficiency and value used as part of the wider justification.

### 6.6.1 Complex, joint and diverse relationships

Although the period had begun with a focus on decentralisation and local variation, arguing for pushing power down to the “...nano level” (Cameron, 2010), as the period progressed integration and greater size was argued to provide solutions, value and resilience. The sense of scale was linked to professionalism, bigger was better and consistent with emphasis on being more, growth and strength.

Such approaches would deliver at scale (Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016; Gloucestershire County Council, 2015b), avoid unnecessary variation in spend (Realising the value consortium, 2016a) efficiently providing “...Better results, better care, a better experience for patients and significant savings” (NHS England, 2014, p. 16) and assumed that joint or collaborative approaches were the preferred solution.

As outlined by the 'One Gloucestershire' partnership, within the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) plan in Gloucestershire:

... we believe that by all working together in a joined up way ...there is an opportunity to build stronger, healthier and happier communities and transform the quality of care and support we provide...We will need to work in collaboration with all our community partners...to develop our detailed proposals for change. (Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, 2016)

The perceived benefits of connections and integration therefore provided more opportunities to make the case for groups and organisations to work together. These connections networks and networking would offer support through involvement and by implication empower individuals and groups to have a say. This was regularly re-presented as the need to draw upon strengths and capacity, argued to be underutilised or latent within the system. However, for those groups and organisations most likely to engage with the system in this area there were cautions made in terms of maintaining this approach.

As the review of the partnership and investment in the VCSE sector noted:

...[neither] ad hoc grant giving, nor contract-based procurement, appear to create a diverse, creative and sustainable VCSE sector...Traditional contract-based commissioning can work for some large-scale VCSE provision and we saw potential in more collaborative approaches to contracting. But these do not appear to be the best way to support community development nor to build social action. (2016)

Such relationships therefore from the VCSE perspective continued to draw upon traditional methods of support and contractual engagement. This lack of diversity had the potential to reinforce the aspects of identity that were valued, for example

larger scale organisations, which could create tensions or misunderstandings within the relationship.

## 6.7 Chapter summary

Reflecting on the analysis of texts, there were problems facing society which were perceived as requiring involvement and action from communities. The period of Discourse Analysis began with the 'Big Society' agenda, which explained the problems being predominantly one of government, specifically big government and its micro management. There were financial decisions to be made, to reduce the deficit, but societal problems remained.

At specific points reviews reconsidered the nature of the society to be created. This was often in response to an external concern, commission, review or event, for example the election of a coalition government or the EU referendum. In each case this offered sobering conclusions on progress.

For example, as suggested by Theresa May:

...at the same time, over recent years these people have felt locked out of the political and social discourse in Britain. If they voiced their concerns, their views were shut down. Decisions made in faraway places didn't always seem to be the right decisions for them. (May, 2017a)

This assessment used the same metaphor as much of the wider discourse which sought to unlock potential within communities, to make them more empowered and resilient. However, these points of reflection and arguments for change, were set in the context of regular re-presentation of issues being 'new'. This controlled the way in which any assessment or evaluation could be undertaken.

Consideration of problems however, triggered a discussion of power. These conversations considered decentralisation, devolution and diversification of services. The dispersal of power and shift away from government to others in communities was linked to a variety of 'calls to action', 'to arms' or the use of military metaphors to encourage communities to step up or step forward. The shift however was described as a means and opportunity for communities and local

government to do what they wanted rather than what central government required. However, the seemingly broad ranging agenda for empowerment was distilled into a very specific set of rights, responsibilities and potential powers to be released, with associated timings, and means through which communities could get involved.

Getting involved then triggered considerations or reflections on identity for those anticipating receipt of these powers and how or where they would be accessed. Much of the discussion was articulated around personal freedom or control over health and wellbeing. This shifted the debate away from these concepts as they might relate to communities in terms of inequality, social justice or change. Instead the focus moved towards the financial, technical and functional ways in which individuals and communities could support and deliver the pre-existing agendas and problems of the system. This assumed need or deficiency was linked to a requirement for individuals and communities to become self-managing and more empowered and resilient, to fulfil these agendas. Much was required to be built in terms of community, empowerment and resilience, using a range of construction related metaphors in terms of foundations, structures and concrete to develop the imagery of resilience, strength, permanence and stability. The language was primarily financial and functional, for example efficiencies to be made in the delivery of care, rather than the use of caring as a characteristic.

The desired characteristics or ideal end states that were most visible concerned economic prosperity, employment and home ownership. Individuals would be strong, confident and connected to others, characteristics that appeared to be valued and required by the system and assumed that everyone wanted or at least could become. Consideration then followed as to how relationships, described through collaboration, integration or partnership could help support these aims.

These relationships had a predominantly functional role, to build capacity, offering increased empowerment and resilience along with financial efficiency.

Relationships and reorganisations were presented as having positive results and delivering improved outcomes. However, the nature of these relationships was not always transparent, and often described in terms of the 'potential'. Options to

engage with the issues in the discourse were arguably closely controlled, described for example by the UK Prime Minister, Theresa May following the EU referendum as a “...once-in-a-generation chance to step back and ask ourselves what kind of country we want to be” (2017a).

This usage of a key event provided the justification or means to articulate an assumption over the assessment of the nature of the society. Whilst change was described as happening over a period of time, the proposition was that an assessment would be subjected to a single window and timeframe, rather than ongoing dialogue. This provided the appearance of an opportunity whilst retaining the option to maintain control and was a common function utilised within the discourse.

The approaches therefore raised questions over whether the concepts were understood as commodity or community based, relational or functional. This had wider implications for the nature of the relationship with communities, participant experience and the potential divergence and disconnect in understandings. This will now be considered in the next chapter, in the findings arising from the semi-structured interviews.

## Chapter 7 - Exploring participant understandings and meanings of community, empowerment and resilience: Findings

A description of empowerment and resilience by Tina, a project worker with young people in Gloucestershire.

*...if something goes wrong in my life, like divorce say, divorce went wrong and pulled the carpet from under my feet, all of a sudden, I had no house, I had a son, I had no income coming in and you go – oh my God what am I doing? - and you panic for a couple of months and then you sort it all out. You sort it all out and you put yourself right back out there, and you get your little support group around you and your friends tell you ‘you're great and he is an idiot for leaving you’ and all the rest of it, and you keep a roof over your head and you sort it out and you just carry on and ‘do’. Inside you might be dying, but you haven't got time for that, you haven't got time....you've got to just keep going and put everything back together for everybody and yourself and so on. Which is ok if you've got the skills to do it, which is ok if you can walk into a solicitors office and go – ‘he's an idiot, he's not getting half my house’ – and it's ok if you can actually fill in the form to the solicitors office and it's ok if you can go to the estate agents and go ‘right, I need a new house, what's going on?’ and put all this right. If you've got the skills to do that, all this form[fill]ing and walking in places and being confident, that's great stuff. But if you can't fill in a form, if you have never been in an estate agents before, if you've never dealt with a bank before, if you've never dealt with all these people in kind of authority who all of a sudden have got a say in your life, do you know what I mean?....you are kind of stuck really aren't you? (Tina)*

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter reflects on the findings arising from the use of semi-structured interviews using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Chapter 5 explored the theoretical underpinnings of IPA and process taken to develop the inclusion criteria, interview schedule, with section 5.3.2 providing a summary list of all participants. IPA studies could vary in size (Smith et al., 2009) and the uses of participant information reflected the richness, not just the frequency or quantity of patterns within the sample. Participants are referenced throughout this chapter with an individual name, changed from their original to provide anonymity.

The findings were set in the context of various challenges and changes encountered by GCC in recent years. GCC's response to this context was articulated in the 'Meeting the Challenge 2 'MTC2' strategy, explaining that "...As a result of these changes [budget, staffing and buildings reductions] although it is smaller, Gloucestershire County Council is more focussed, more flexible and more responsive than it has ever been" (2015b, p. 3). The findings summarised in this chapter aim to complement the existing sources used by GCC and provide a different lens to understand the experiences of participants. This presents a complex picture, with areas of convergence and disconnection, to be considered in the discussion of Chapter 8.

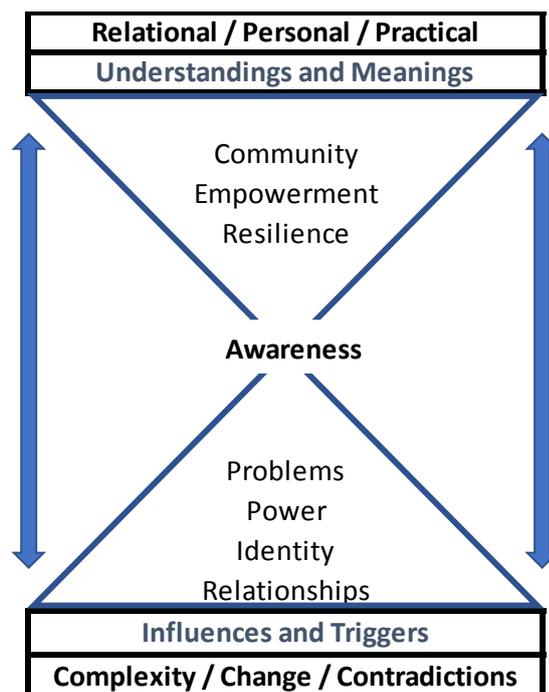
The extended quotation from Tina, as with that of Mohammed Rasoul in Chapter 1 encapsulated many of the findings from the interview process. This provided a local view in terms of how empowerment and resilience were experienced and understood. It also illuminated the context of complexity, change and contradiction, and four themes of problems, power, identity and relationships. Tina was a 'Boundary Spanner', a term with many and diverse meanings (Paraponaris et al., 2015) but defined by Williams (2013) as individuals with a dedicated role or responsibility to work in partnership or collaboration with others. Tina was a parent, friend, carer, project worker, member of local groups and forums working collaboratively and informally across a variety of age groups. Tina was also known informally as a local leader and voice of authority, having many years of experience living and working in difficult housing estates. She was formally recognised as a

manager of a building from which community related services were delivered for her neighbourhood.

Her experiences therefore described a context of complexity, given the various skills and attributes required to cope with life changes. Experiences might also be contradictory, in that her feelings held inside, might not necessarily be fully uncovered to others, for example her description of “...dying inside”. There was much you might need the confidence to do or learn, yet still manage feelings of being overwhelmed or daunted by the tasks. This could trigger reflections over personal identity and the need to draw on a wider support network of relationships, who told Tina she was “...great and he is an idiot”.

The findings from the analysis were therefore relational, personal and practical in intent. These descriptions were developed through an awareness of the four overarching themes that emerged and were distilled from the transcripts: Problems, Power, Identity and Relationships. The analysis of these themes reflected the context, relationship and influences in terms of complexity, change and contradiction. This understanding arising from the 19 participant interviews outlined in this chapter is shown diagrammatically in Figure 9:

**Figure 9: Summary of IPA participant findings**



As found in Chapter 6 when analysing the discourse, becoming empowered or resilient was expected and widely communicated across policy as a common sense and simple idea. Yet, how that worked in practice, and in the community, was more complicated when articulated by participants. Descriptions came with positive and negative aspects, for example there was the opportunity for support, yet others might have an opinion or talk about you. These experiences, thoughts and feelings as described by Tina could be interpreted and conceptualised thematically through: a series of problems (e.g. keeping a roof over your head, filling in a form), consideration of power (others having a say in your life), identity (mother, skills, self-image) and wider relationships (support networks, banks, estate agents).

Tina's reflections and experiences of community, empowerment and resilience were personal, relational, requiring an awareness of yourself, often requiring practical responses to the events and those around you. One event could bring you into contact with a wide range of people and organisations, with different backgrounds and agendas. This example shows how the analysis of just a few paragraphs can elicit much in terms of interpretation. Given each interview was over an hour in length and transcribed verbatim, the feasibility of exploring all 19 participants in this depth was not possible.

The findings of both the Discourse Analysis and IPA will be discussed together within Chapter 8.

## 7.2 Construction of the overarching themes: problems, power, identity and relationships

As outlined in Chapter 5, the use and development of the interview schedule sought to provide space to explore what mattered to the participants, to hear their voices, whilst considering the understandings and meanings of the key concepts. As the interview schedule progressed, reflective summaries were created following each interview, with initial examples provided at Appendix 16. Further examples of these can be found at Appendix 26 highlighting the continuing development of thematic areas. Transcripts were arranged and managed for the purposes of analysis within NVIVO 10. Key participant quotes and researcher conceptual

annotations were also summarised. Excerpts outlining an example of this process are included at Appendix 27. Quotes and annotations were initially recorded in the order in which they appeared within the interview, then re-grouped around emerging themes. Themes were developed around a series of approaches as suggested by Smith et al. (2009), and described in section 5.8 including numeration, contextualisation and function.

As shown in Appendix 28 both the individual summaries, conceptual noting and quotes of interest from completed interviews helped to support the development through polarisation, abstraction and subsumption to generate the four key themes in an iterative and hermeneutic circle. This process moved through the texts from the individual to the group, from the sentence to the whole interview, from the word or quote to the theme, and back again.

### 7.3 The understandings and meanings of community, empowerment and resilience

As recognised within the literature review, there were a variety of uses of resilience and empowerment as concepts (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). Within the context of community development, these concepts were used across a wide range of disciplines to consider how individuals or groups navigated or adapted to the complexities and challenges of life (Pugh, 2014, as cited in Steiner et al., 2016). Initially having transcribed all the interviews, researcher interpretations were summarised in terms of the definitions provided and an excerpt can be seen at Appendix 29. These showed a series of common themes present in the responses.

The four overarching themes represented the key aspects of the participants' experience and awareness as drawn out from the wider discussions. These helped to understand factors that could help or hinder the development of community, empowerment and resilience. Before the themes are considered in more detail, an initial summary of the participant understandings of each concept will be explored. The implications of these understandings for GCC and other groups and organisations will be considered in the Conclusions and Recommendations chapters.

### 7.3.1 The understanding of community

The overriding sense from participants was of a relational and overwhelmingly positive understanding of community. Even though it was hard to define, often being 'communities' rather than 'community'. Although perceived by some as a lazy label, it remained a powerful concept. Communities were complex, and could be linked to place, identity, common interest, work, leisure. At the same time, perhaps contradictorily, individual descriptions were relatively simple. These would often comprise of one or two aspects based around relational descriptions of belonging, caring and looking out for one another. For example, Jeff, a younger but experienced housing worker described how community meant you knew others and they knew you, you were not alone. Being a member of a community or a community worker was to be visible, playing their part, they were seen around:

I know from working with guys who have had offending backgrounds for ages, part of the huge problem with them and some of their behaviours and their approach or opinion about services and about authority is that they don't know them, and these people would just do a crime - and so the community aspect used to really help with that. A community officer used to come to every open day that we did, he would come to house meetings and was even talking to clients, and I could see from these guys who hate the police, their opinions were changing. Their whole attitude towards authority figures could change and you know that has a really big positive impact.

The relationship was also two-way in that people looked out for each other and cared for each other, something developed over many years. Caring was important, it mattered in terms of perceptions of loneliness, feeling safe and accepted. People had 'dark times', 'dark places', the difficult times where others need to be mindful of looking after, but not necessarily completely fixing themselves or others. This

was a way of looking at what it might mean to achieve an outcome, be independent, knowing when to step up or step back.

Lizzie, a project worker with young people had lived and worked in the same estate for many years. This estate was regularly described as challenging, and she explained that life in the community was not easy and may not be smooth. Despite this, she felt there was still a sense of optimism:

... [community] is everybody looking after everybody, you know. You don't have to get on with everybody in your community and certainly people don't here, but there is a sense that when something goes wrong if you need something this community pulls together...

Place and geography were important, often used as a defining frame of reference, for example being a 'Forester', i.e. from the Forest of Dean area of the county. At a very local level a road could be a defining line, either side of which reflected the different characteristics of the people living there. At the same time participants reflected upon what might not be visible, for example the absence of a pub, church, community centre or a particular person. However, whatever the level or boundary of community that was described, it was something with a personal feeling and implication of intimacy. Participants talked of people being available, tolerant, understanding, looking after each other, needing each other and interdependence. This was not necessarily a formal or recognised partnership but a relational one. These outcomes came from being practical, hands on and credible within relationships. Communities were characterised by relationships where honesty was important. This could be both positive and negative, recognising that individuals had needs, often wanting something out of community. Yet there was a parallel hope and trust that there might still be more in common than separated people. Feeling 'outside' of community was not necessarily a bad thing, and this could have been by choice. For example, participants often had other activities that took up time, or just felt there was no need for it on a personal level, perhaps needing to work outside of the system due to lack of formal recognition or support. Working outside the system could even be reflected in a shared camaraderie around criminal

activity. Often though working outside of the system was seen as the way to get things done or be in control.

### 7.3.2 The understanding of empowerment

Most participants reflected that the word 'empowerment' was not necessarily used in their vocabulary, reflecting an academic, serious meaning, with grand connotations. Participant perspectives were also relational, based on a nurturing environment, friendship and interdependence. This could have been through making friends, becoming a part of a network or community. Participants often explained empowerment in terms suggesting it was a different state of being, or in a having belief they could become a part of an 'other' world. In this 'other' place, individuals or organisations acted in a very different way giving space to be empowered. Perhaps in a similar way to visiting a foreign place, much talk was of giving people the tools, skills, capabilities to be comfortable on the journey and arrival at the unfamiliar destination. Becoming empowered often required time to learn and then acclimatise, as it was not something that could be given away easily due to its complexity.

For participants, being empowered meant being able to be proactive and make a difference, to be practical. Lizzie described this as:

...giving [young people] the tools, giving them the ability to do something that is empowering...So, we give them new opportunities and new experiences and they feel empowered to get out of [the estate] to make choices that will affect their future and give them fantastic life choices, that kind of stuff.

It could also reflect the need to improve or change something personally, often in the context of other relationships, but on the participants' terms. Don, working at a senior level in a Gloucestershire charity, with experience of working with challenging client groups explained empowerment as:

...enabling people to do something for themselves, enable people to see the strengths that they've got, giving them permission to do things, a chance to explore being who they are, being themselves, with no great expectations.

Therefore, understanding the wider factors shaping personal stories and political actions could be transformative in a collective context (Ledwith, 2009). Getting something done could also require learning how the system worked, given its complexity and myriad of relationships and to use that to an advantage. Education and schooling were significant, yet a different type of education was still required throughout life, in order to get by.

At the same time there was a strong sense that being empowered, was also a willingness to step back and let go. There were some approaches that you couldn't keep taking, being unhelpful for the participant or others around them. This though was not just about service delivery but being able to step into an awareness of power dynamics and decision making.

Sue, having worked over many decades in a variety of public sector organisations and local authorities described it as:

That is how I see it [empowerment] yes, empowering communities to make their own decisions and to do things. We make a lot of noise about empowerment, but actually we are more about giving bits and not all.

Therefore, it was important to act in a way that was credible and honest, as many participants had the sense that to be empowered required a change in mindset. Empowerment embodied an attitude or commitment to giving people space. Space to ask questions and time to know what the right questions were to ask. To build wider networks to help with that process. Empowerment gave permission and valued encouragement. Listening, absorbing and being able to understand other people's issues, was of importance. Having the time to do that and confidence before speaking up yet being aware that these issues may affect you at another point in time. Confidence was a key aspect of empowerment. For example, having

the confidence to look at the facts as well as the emotions of a situation, particularly when engaging with the system. Having the confidence to fail and know that you could turn to someone who would help you try again. This person would believe in you, trusted that things could be done, be different, and could see your potential.

Ultimately for participants empowerment reflected the confidence and encouragement for their ideas and goals to be recognised as meaningful or significant. That they as individuals could become more self-aware of their skills, expectations and experiences. This might mean they saw life in a different way going forward. This could influence the future they wanted, or that to which they would give their time, experience or money. This had parallels with thinkers such as Paulo Freire who saw individuals changing as they sought to change the world (Collins & Lister, 1996, cited in Emejulu, 2015).

### 7.3.3 The understanding of resilience

Participants regularly explained resilience as linked to coping, particularly with the things that life 'threw' at you.

As Don explained:

...[resilience] is an ability to survive. It's about having the inner strength to be able to manage whatever's thrown at you or the day to day life or whatever situation you're in and having the resources to deal with your own levels of anxiety, frustration, you know, whatever might be there.

Tom, a younger elected member of the Council, with experience of youth work used similar language:

[resilience] is being able to cope with situations that life throws up. Like mental health for example. Being able to deal with crisis in your life. I am a good example - I am not always...I can have wobbles and that can completely throw me off whatever it is I am doing or wherever I am at.

'Throwaway' comments or seemingly small actions could also be significant, which could influence participant attitudes towards worth and value. This had parallels with reflections on what could be thrown away and recycled, similarly, the apparent short-term nature and reinvention of ideas, products and services. We often 'threw' money at problems when things went wrong, for example in the increased budgets allocated to services in the midst of critical regulatory judgements. Participants reflected on the contradictions between impersonal definitions, judgements, measurements of challenges and what could be done to recover or recycle oneself, to bring about change or just manage situations. Individuals could require a balance of professional and informal support, rather than be classified or referred as needing one or the other. For participants, resilience also reflected another journey or sorts, to find a way through, around or back to where they felt they needed to be.

Following on from Tina's description of divorce at the start of the chapter she continued on to describe the experience of resilience in the context of a journey:

So we start building up ways to actually talk to people [in authority], communicate with people, start building some kind of resilience to what is actually going to happen in your life, that you've got the skills then to come out the other side.

Sarah, an elected representative at the Council, with many years of experience in health and care sectors similarly described resilience as:

...Something you learn and acquire, you don't always have it at the beginning, but you learn how to become it.

There was also a degree of honesty required in the understandings, as resilience could be important if one got feedback that was hard to hear. Did the receiver therefore have a willingness to look at how things were presented or perceived by others? Was the relationship aware of and resilient to cope with the history, assumptions or baggage that was brought into any given situation?

It appeared that there was an understanding that resilience did not mean that everything would improve. Individuals might not get back to the point at which they previously found themselves. They might have changed, or the circumstances, and often the system or services around them had. For participants this could mean that the status quo was an acceptable, manageable - if imperfect - position. Changes therefore, or assumptions over financial savings or a new solution, whilst not always unexpected, were not always seen as helpful.

Part of this understanding required a degree of contemplation over boundaries, to be realistic over what could be achieved, to look after oneself, but also safeguard against the expectations of others. For example, being visible and seen as a leader also meant participants might be increasingly subject to the views and opinions of others. Again, looking after themselves in the first instance had a degree of implied selfishness, but was ultimately required before participants might be able to help or empower others in the way they wanted.

As with the other concepts, resilience was understood as something to learn and acquire over time, but also to learn in terms of the system and their relationship to it. This would enable them to have confidence in the system, or that they could be resilient despite the ways it defined and related to them. This had been described as "...positive coping with persistent occupational stress" (Lamb & Cogan, 2016, p. 475). Resilience was also relational in that making friends, online or face to face was important, although this might mean that you dropped off the formal radar. Tools and skills were also mentioned as necessary, there could be phases, in terms of events or formal process that triggered a need for resilience when dealing with the system. This could be a challenge or battle, mediation, understanding and acceptance of an outcome, particularly when dealing with an organisation or person perceived to be in authority.

For example, Fatima, an advocate for minority and ethnic groups working across Gloucestershire offered her reflections as to aspects of resilience:

Are communities retreating back, feeling less confident perhaps? If the community has trust and communication, then there would be the capacity and resilience to overcome that phase, period and situations when they are being challenged or when the environment is hostile. Strength and confidence in the system – if you have that, it would help build resilience.

Therefore, being resilient in some shape or form, could enable you to engage or remain engaged with others and feel more involved in the world.

#### 7.4 The four overarching themes and subthemes

The themes arising from the analysis of interviews were clustered around problems, power, identity and relationships.

As with the main concepts of community empowerment and resilience, given the differences in definition and usage, it was possible for themes to have relevance across more than one area. The greater depth of participant responses concerned the areas of identity and relationships when compared to the analysis of discourse. There was a similar recognition of power, and both approaches raised many examples of problems. However, the nature of the problems as perceived by participants and outlined within the discourse often differed.

Peter, a participant having both community development experience from within and outside of GCC noted:

I think from all 3-4 of the roles that I have had, the strong sense that I have been left with, is the extent to which the tensions that inevitably come up between communities and institutions are so much more driven by misunderstanding and lack of understanding than by any deliberate attempt to antagonise or do the wrong thing.

Exploring meaning in identity and relationships, as participants understood them was something many had not been asked before. As noted in section 5.1.2, the analysis and creation of themes could be described as a ‘Hermeneutic Circle’. This recognised the need to move iteratively, back and forth between individual words, extracts and the whole text. How the reviews of subthemes and overarching themes were shaped and linked is outlined in Table 2:

**Table 2: Summary of the four themes and subthemes**

<b>Interview Themes</b>	<b>Conceptual Themes</b>	<b>Conceptual Detail / Subtheme</b>
Complexity of the system	<b>Problems</b>	Lack of opportunities
Connections between the system and people		Time to think / reflect
Complexity of people		Disempowering definitions / discourse / requirements
Being heard	<b>Power</b>	Having some influence over the messages
Getting things done (visibly)		Being flexible with the evidence, involvement and outcomes
Being seen to act justly and receive justice		Listening in engagement, learning through participation. How and who do we benefit?
Being credible and validation	<b>Identity</b>	What is the best use of my time?
Credibility / justice		Why do I do what I do?
Being credible		Who am I working for?
Being balanced / credible		How do I make a difference?
Being able to influence		How to take opportunities?
Validation / acceptance / recognition - pride in the community	<b>Relationships</b>	Being a member
Influencing others		Being a representative
Acceptance / validation by others		The extent of honesty / vulnerability / empathy / being known
Being heard / understood / accepted / tolerant		The extent of assumptions / judgements

## 7.5 Problems

For participants the problems revolved around the complexity of the system. This has been linked to the increasing complexity of needs presented (Hood, 2015), and also to the quality of connections between people, the system and the time available to reflect on its workings in practice. For many participants there were a series of problems within each theme to overcome.

### 7.5.1 Complexity and opportunity

The system was perceived as too complex to understand and navigate easily. There were very specific times and timeframes, places, and expectations in which to engage. Given the complexity, those who had the resources could often take advantage of opportunities. This was perceived to benefit established, bigger formal organisations, often seen as less risky rather than smaller ones (House of Lords, 2017c).

This could be compounded by the approaches taken when reaching the point of engagement:

...not far from here was a housing association who decided they wanted to do more community work. So, they hired a hall in the local area, invited loads of people and stood at the door with clipboards and were asking people loads of questions as soon as they walked in. What happened? Nobody walked in. They didn't get anything. But that was their way of doing, that's how they thought they should do things. (Don)

Complications even before making contact were added to by complexities of jargon and language once the relationship and contact was made. Regular changes abounded in terms of organisational structures, branding, and new initiatives all being influenced by an array of priorities and agendas. Participants, often without the wider support structure or access to resources, felt the pressure to respond, which could mean changing priorities or behaviours, to act. This could sometimes be at risk to their own organisation as they became aware of the request.

This could have implications for those making requests of communities too:

As I said a bit earlier, we know we have got to hand things over but we want to be prescriptive about how we do it. Actually, sometimes you have got to take a leap of faith. Sometimes somebody's got to fail, but it will not be everybody, but you have got to trust people to get on with it. (Sue)

Therefore, taking risks or a leap of faith required trust from all involved.

#### 7.5.2 Connections

Participants reflected on the need to understand the questions and issues, connect with the right people and interpret the language, often in a format that was unclear to them, using buzzwords such as empowerment. The language could cause confusion over what was required, not least in trying to focus limited resources for impact. Such language could be used by the system to provide legitimization of actions, with multiple interpretations sounding positive, avoiding any language of failure. This could provide cover from direct challenge (Cornwall & Brock, 2005) and affect the nature of the relationship, creating unrealistic expectations through a simplified context.

However, this did not necessarily mean failure:

...it's also a willingness to acknowledge that [when building informal networks] there are some relationships that either just don't work or are never going to work, so you just have to accept that and move on...that's because they've got different agendas, or they just don't share the same vision and passion and that's fine. There are always those people out there, you've just got to find them, which is the trick. (Don)

'Moving on' in this context was not about stopping, stepping back or participants changing their vision. For participants there was often an awareness or acceptance of the situation, to bounce back and try again because of a belief in its efficacy. The belief that there were like-minded people one would eventually connect with -

rather than being told to do so or be required to do so as part of a commissioning cycle or planning process. This was a creative process, described as an art or a trick on this occasion. This reflected a type of entrepreneurship in developing and finding relationships, rather than one motivated by the need to find financial savings.

Often the need from the system to make contact was due to a type of service change or problem needing to be resolved. This might be communicated by those in a specific engagement role, such as the Local Engagement Officers (LEOs) in Gloucestershire, or those working directly with communities. Whilst very few of the participants knew of or had met a LEO, the current climate was one of seeking to support communities to 'step up' (Gloucestershire County Council, 2015c) and help build longer term capacity.

The first point of contact, where decisions or judgements were made, shaped the longer-term conversation or relationship could be significant too. Helen, working in the area of community advice and support particularly with older and frail groups noted:

...when you can get through [to the GCC adult social care line]... Lots of turnover... I imagine it is a very difficult place to work in. I feel quite sorry for them. I always thought that we get the really good job because we get out and see people. They just get people on the phone who are stressed and upset.

Whilst from a system perspective, 'conclusion' often meant completion or success, these experiences could often be confusing and impersonal for participants, requiring a great deal of determination for the individual to follow through to the end. The perceptions of handovers between the aspects of the system, and a person's return to a less engaged relationship with it could have consequences. For example, reflections on the quality of integration or pathway actually in place. The last contact could therefore be significant as an individual was signposted elsewhere, or the contact concluded.

Elizabeth, supporting and mentoring carers across Gloucestershire and a carer herself, reflected on how this could also be very significant at a personal level:

...I knew resources always tight and you don't want to be the one who takes too much. The County Councillor who had got involved rung me and said 'I hear you are happy now'. I said, 'well that's not the right word it's been hideous experience'. So, [The Councillor] arranged a meeting...to look at how things had gone.

However, Jamal, working for a charity supporting a range of volunteer projects in Gloucester noted that in practice this could result in longer term challenges for those working in communities:

...Someone new comes in, spends two years doing amazing work and building up great connections, and is just starting to do the real work, but then they get promoted and move on. Then someone else comes along and you start the whole process again...I think to myself 'should I really be bothered investing my time into getting to know the next one?'

It was not that such an approach did not have perceived benefits, but the sense that 'real' work followed on from this and took time. Project funding, contracts might be of varying lengths, reorganisations might happen, but the 'professional' people would probably move on. This perceived coming, going and irregular levels of interest could have implications for levels of trust, connection and sense of worth within the relationship. This had parallels with the later discussion of recovery, analogy of foster care and conclusions over the role of a local authority in section 9.3.2.

Yet although much could change, the message could remain the same:

But [LEOs] giving messages out became much more important when we had to go through massive change and we had to change people's expectations

or influence their expectations by saying we could not provide the services any longer, so over the last six years that was more important to be giving the messages out, because you have got to give the same message out four or five times before it hits home. (Sue)

Those participants however, often the focus of state attempts to 'step up', could already be living as well as volunteering or working in their community. They would remain even if much around them, in terms of agendas and strategies might change.

Yet, to remain in a local community was also to see recurring patterns of commissioning behaviour which may not be consistent with the messages:

...there is a rush to get people in and out of hospital. They get home and are readmitted within a few days. Now they've shut all the cottage hospitals down, and now they are thinking perhaps we need to open them again. We need centres for people to get back on their feet and feel confident about going home. I sometimes think we have been here before. But that's just one example. (Sarah)

### 7.5.3 Complexity: people, definitions and requirements

As explored in this chapter, complexity was a factor in describing community and of the organisation of the system. Within the discourse as described in Chapter 6, complexity had a financial, functional and technical emphasis. One of the key messages within the discourse was that more could be achieved, often with fewer resources. Therefore, the call was for communities to 'step up'. However, to assume that participants could or should 'step up' was hard for certain participants to hear. Whilst this call could be well intentioned, for example seeking to learn lessons from previous mistakes, there could still be personal consequences and difficult feelings to manage.

As Elizabeth explained:

At the time, [the council commissioner] said ‘you sound like just the kind of person who could help us with this group we are setting up... I thought ‘I haven’t got the time to do the work, to get the money, to keep the roof over my head and you want me to help you set up a new system’. I tease her about it now, but at the time I thought ‘how can you have heard all I have been through and ask me this?!’

Such feelings could be compounded when it came from an organisation that was not felt to be very visible in the first place. In terms of communications and engagement messaging, it was perceived as using a regular theme that highlighted long term concerns over finances, to justify actions in a short-term manner. This approach could mean it might not necessarily engage and involve others in the best of ways. The lack of diversity in approach therefore, perceived amongst decision makers also presented challenges for participants.

Belinda, an employee of GCC with many years of experience working in and with the NHS, Local Authorities and Charities described how this could play out in practice:

I could tell this chap was thinking ‘she doesn't know, what is she talking about’ and I felt like saying that actually...challenging him and saying that ‘this is how it is’ kind of thing. I do vaguely remember him when I was in the NHS, citing how it was in the past and I was thinking ‘but it doesn't work like that anymore’.

#### 7.5.3.1 Complexity of definitions and requirements

The definitions and requirements could also create short term financial concerns for some participants and long-term instability, another contradiction or mismatch. Therefore, the reality of stepping up was complex, and therefore not necessarily felt as described in an entirely rounded way. As will be explored in the following

sections around identity and relationships, stepping up, was not interpreted as having a purely financial context, with an active and functional meaning. It triggered considerations of commitments to be made and relationships to foster.

Esther, a GCC employee also working with local communities, with experience of working with vulnerable groups was aware of how difficult the challenges could be:

I think what pulls people back, and it does it with me and I am sure it probably does with a lot of people, is you don't want to commit because you know you might not always be able to. I think because things are up and down in terms of your pressures in life and you don't know when you are going to be able to always...

#### 7.5.3.1.1 Complexity of definitions and requirements: Consequences

Unsurprisingly the consequences could be significant for those on the ground:

...the biggest problem we've got is fund raising and our funds are running out fast now and we are not sure if we are going to be able to survive the next couple of months and if that happens then it won't just be three of us losing our jobs and our mortgage payments, it will be a whole community losing a support system... (Tina)

For those working for or with charitable or voluntary organisations, the need to make ends meet with small sums of money were similar concerns and not something new. Yet in the midst of all the things perceived to be 'thrown' at participants, those working around the system adopted a series of coping and survival strategies for example, to comply or resist the current climate (Milbourne & Cushman, 2015). To have to reduce costs, lose staff and make difficult decisions was not uncommon, they were also 'meeting the challenge' to use the GCC policy headline.

Rick, supporting many voluntary groups across a Gloucestershire district, following a career in education explained how working directly with communities also made the personal impacts visible:

...It was sad because I knew the impact it would have on them [3 volunteers with Learning Disabilities who had been supported to get employment lasting over 4 years]. They knew it was coming. It wasn't a surprise. We'd talked to them. We wouldn't just give them a redundancy notice. Our support worker had left. They knew that, and we kept saying, 'We'll see if we can find somebody else, but, if we can't, we're going to have [to make people redundant] ...'

For many participants, this was the way things had been for a long time, neither new or unprecedented. Numerous events and occasions were cited where activities had been extremely difficult or close to the organisation shutting down. During the period of the studentship, nationally the Community Development Foundation closed in 2016 and within Gloucestershire, the Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and Community Action (GAVCA) also closed during the same year. It was not just the state that had needed to step back.

This could mean a managed retreat and refocussing for those working with communities:

Yes, I think it's just in the last few years that we've pulled our horns in, I guess, and we've just focused on our locality. It certainly has a much more direct benefit to your local community if you do that. (Rick)

This type of retreat could create a challenge when the system was looking to deliver services at scale, across larger populations, clusters or networks. However, having made the decision to commit, volunteer or get involved, participant understandings of what was required, timings of delivery and the pattern demand could differ from

that presented by the system. Many of the key services in place delivered by professionals were perceived to run in normal working hours, the main exception being the NHS. Voluntary or community related services were perceived to be filling in the gaps around that pattern.

The use of language was important, as participants queried what it meant to be described as a 'professional'. Many had experience of working in settings where they had often spent every day with troubled families, difficult children or individuals 'on the radar' of the police or other statutory services. The 'professionals' might see these individuals for a meeting once a week or a fortnight. Some participants would see them every day, for many hours. This therefore caused some participants to question why they were not viewed with a similar status. Agencies might have a series of criteria or access that would decide who was eligible or not, they did not have the luxury to act in a similar way.

#### 7.5.3.2 Complexity of people

There could be clubs, activities and groups, which could be "...below the radar" (Phillimore, 2015) or even 'off the radar' of the system running in the evenings and weekends. These often acted as a place for people who were 'on the radar' of the system. Yet, even though participants felt they were in contact with them for much longer than the professionals, they might not be formally included in discussions or receive support for the work they did. They were not always partnered in the relationship.

For those participants with a caring responsibility of some description, a '7-day service' was the norm, there was no choice about considering the merits of stepping up or down:

... emotionally I felt like I was in a bubble, 'yes I am here but my world is all so separate and different'. You are so knackered, so stressed...Others are saying 'It's been a dreadful month, I've been away every weekend, I haven't kept up with the washing, we are just going to relax this weekend...' – and

I'm thinking.....oooohhhh! How dreadful, too much visiting friends!! It's so far away from our reality – you feel so disconnected. (Elizabeth)

As with the other concepts, being a carer and caring had a broad reach in terms of understanding and interpretation from participants. This was not just about a provider delivering care to another person, often described as vulnerable. This experience was focussed on coping, getting through each day and reflecting upon what that might mean if one could not. Life as experienced had stopped and new one had begun. Understanding and exploring these interpretations could have longer term implications for the 60,000 residents estimated to be informally caring for others in Gloucestershire.

Caring could also be significant for an understanding and attachment to places as well as people:

...For me I have always had that, it is in me, I cannot let the place go, so whether that means I am paid or voluntary, I do whatever I need to do to keep the place going - to make sure that the kids here now who are going through similar and even worse situations are afforded that opportunity.

(Lizzie)

#### 7.5.3.2.1 Complexity of people: Consequences

Therefore, the use of time having chosen to commit was a very precious and scarce resource. This contrasted with a perceived assumed, as yet unexploited level of community capacity waiting to be activated and deployed by the system. It was significant as lack of time could prematurely close off opportunities for reflection and the understanding of a phenomenon (Willig, 2007). These tensions could have unintended and unexpected consequences from a participant perspective. For example, Jeff describes how it could be easy for a person to be portrayed as part of the process:

...just as he turned the radio off from the [Police] control room he said “oh domestic” and rolled his eyes, and that actually I felt that set the tone a bit really. I don't think he was being negative about it, but he had dealt with so many and dealt with the particular part of the process and was not very open minded about it. That kind of frustrated me in the end and I found [it was a process] rather than dealing with the person, you were dealing with this crime... it comes with an incident number and becomes an incident day and becomes a set of evidence and becomes very detached from the person.

These types of events could create the sense of impersonal organisations developing or tolerating solutions for communities without an understanding of how they might be interpreted by others. This could be particularly relevant for volunteers or others coming into a situation with new or different ideas. Their priorities might not be about the process, but rather the people. Therefore, the problems were often perceived as a complex system being organised around a narrow range of approaches, engaging with similar minded organisations to achieve similar outcomes. This was underpinned by a series of rules suiting the expectations of professionals, which brings us to findings in respect of power.

## 7.6 Power

Through the problems encountered, participants recognised the significance and usefulness of power. How this was defined and described is outlined in the following sections. However regardless of definition, many did not believe they could access it, or if they could, the window of opportunity was brief. If they did gain access or had some type of engagement with those perceived to have influence, they didn't necessarily see the results of their involvement.

### 7.6.1 Being heard and having influence

Participants saw the system in all its guises, being expressed most visibly as a series of rules and expectations, rewards and sanctions, formal and informal expectations

that defined behaviour and shaped activities. Very few participants used the words power or control, unless prompted to do so, particularly in terms of the direct questions on empowerment or resilience. This could reflect a lack of exposure to the workings of power, or a reluctance to discuss that as potentially having negative consequences for their organisation. Whilst not a significant element of participants vocabulary, descriptions of power could be inferred through the wider system at a variety of levels. Participants reflected on how organisations worked together, with systems within systems all regulating access. Each had its own rules and expectations. For example, the committee system, complaints system, or communication channels such the email system.

#### 7.6.1.1 Being heard and having influence: Relationship with the system

For those participants working more directly within the system power was often linked to influence of key individuals, elected representatives or committees, needing to make a case or gain agreement. Individuals seen to be holding power were aware of its influence but had not always explored that, or the consequences in more detail.

Therefore, the nature of a role could also affect the power dynamics within the system:

...it does surprise me how some people seem to, almost be fearful around me, because of my position. But I keep thinking 'it's just me...you know, what's all this big deal?' So, there is that, I suppose...I don't know, I suppose whether is it a myth even? (Sarah)

For those perceived as outside or less directly connected to the system, much of the meaning relating to power primarily concerned the characteristics and ways in which it was applied, and then the actions that resulted from it.

This environment contributed to position that did not necessarily function in a helpful way:

We can jump up and down and shout all we like, but nobody ever listens.

That, of course, is often one of the criticisms of not just the County Council, but the District Council, the Town Council, and anybody. (Jeff)

But listening was important, influencing both sides. Simple things could be potentially powerful:

I think there is real power in just being around people. Sometimes it is not hand holding, it is just having somebody else to talk to and say 'this is what I want to do what do you think?'...(Jamal)

This attitude and level of awareness could have implications for the way in which relationships could function. For example, in influencing the way in which an organisation holding power chose to 'be' culturally in terms of behaviour, rather than 'do' in terms of function. Participants recognised many cultural aspects of individual influences. For example, in the same way some participants reflected on how short-term decisions of young people could affect their lives in later years and how they needed to listen, a similar understanding was seen in terms of the use of power. This in some ways suggested an immaturity of those exercising it.

Therefore, considering the realistic expectations for influence was an important factor:

...but I think the much stronger sense for me it is very hard for people to figure out how the state works and therefore to have any impact on it. It is not about whether the state is prepared to listen it is more about whether the state is capable of hearing? (Peter)

7.6.1.2 Being heard and having influence: Relationship with structure and agency  
Whilst many of these reflections on power and influence considered the agency of individuals, structural factors were also significant and complex. Inequalities still felt very real to some participants, particularly in terms of the impact on race:

I have learned and seen that in the UK inequality starts very early. From birth you are born into a system with assumptions. Racial inequality begins from birth. This creates a perception of people being less intelligent. Then kids battle with these assumptions at primary school and consistently throughout their education and contact with the justice system...We have to think about who is around the table. Is it the same people always around the table, formulating answers who have no idea of challenges and complexities, who keep on offering interventions that don't address the real issues. (Fatima)

Participants recognised the reduction in facilities and assets within communities, both in terms of the number and quality. This was not described as a specific point in time, for example in terms of austerity. This period was perceived as a longer process of gradual running down and disengagement, which eventually led to the changes. The process of change often moved at a much quicker pace, adding to the feeling that decisions had been made in advance or developed over a longer time. The changes though were often perceived as directly linked to funding cuts, or as part of a reorganisation where services were redesigned or amalgamated into a single, sometimes larger service covering a larger geography. Changes could happen indirectly, for example being due to the impact of housebuilding on the character and relationships within communities, or the redevelopment of residential or industrial areas into commercial areas.

This had a variety of implications where new developments were built near existing estates, which had also longer-term consequences:

We spent a long time and were the only organisation in the community really and the one in the centre of it all having to balance those two groups of people...people are going to feel anxious and you have bought your lovely houses, you have got your nice cars, it is a different kind of estate that

people are used to living on. I think probably in that five-year period it took us a long time to get everybody on a level. We have gone past the tolerance stage...I am not sure they feel part of this community, but I think they are more accepting of what is going on. (Lizzie)

This perspective reflected on the complexity and awareness needed to work with groups, to be tolerant and accepting. Even at the end of a local process, perhaps taking many years, the idea of integration might still be something to aspire to, rather than an expectation of outcome in all cases. Some areas were well provided for in terms of facilities, available for those to access with the means to do so:

We are lucky, we have got a couple of good churches, good GP practice, library, good shops and facilities schools... so people move into [the area] to try and get their children into it [the local school]. (Sarah)

7.6.1.3 Being heard and having influence: Relationship with place  
Many participants reflected on the differences between urban and rural settings. Often the urban might have more services or facilities in place based on an assessment of need.

However, this did not necessarily result in the development of communities:

... I think that made it harder because it was right in the middle of the city centre. So, it didn't feel like there is that strong a community around the city centre, maybe there is but I didn't feel like we and the people we were working with were included in that. So, if there was a community there, I wasn't strongly aware of it and it was really quite hard to try and connect those guys back into having something else meaningful to do with their time that might have a positive impact on the drug taking and offending behaviour. (Jeff)

### 7.6.2 Getting things done, evidence and benefits

The system was perceived as holding power relevant to several areas. This could have been in terms of commissioning services, approving planning applications and agreeing priorities for investment.

Participants therefore held many concerns communicated throughout the interviews. For those who relied on specific funding streams there were regular fears of losing funding. Activities could be at risk of ceasing, with related jobs or support lost, with resulting impacts for their community. Being successful with one bid, could help in convincing other funders, thereby becoming known within the system. This could prove to be as valuable as the actual outcomes or evidence needing to be recorded and reported, which could be hard to quantify for the purposes of reporting outcomes. Even where it could, it did not necessarily reflect the nature of the work undertaken or the impact.

Participants working more directly with the system reflected how learning from and changing approaches to gathering evidence, experiences and making judgements could be used to deliver results and benefits:

In my early days, I was more emotive – ‘Oh you can’t do this, you can’t do that’.....Having been in it [local politics] for some time now, you see both sides. Having been to many neighbour disputes, when they come to you, you think there is another side to the story. I’d better check first rather than taking it and running with it. (Sarah)

However, the perceived lack of change in system approaches more generally could affect the ways in which participants worked and the time they prioritised on fundraising, rather than the purpose of the charity itself. This in turn generated an additional bureaucracy to service, to write bids, gain funds and demonstrate outcomes. This could compound tensions when there was a perception that the decisions were already made, and power would not be applied justly, that some organisations were just preferred. Some participants reflected that the data or

outcomes as requested by commissioners, and subsequently stated as delivered by providers might have more presentational credibility than actual substance.

This reflected a perception of the unequal distribution of power:

There are some people who always seem to get everything and some people who don't seem to get anything. That is just fact and how it is.

(Lizzie)

Yet it was not just those making decisions that held assumptions over the power the system held:

Because they do come [kids in the project] with attitude sometimes as well.

Not just normal young people attitudes, they do come with attitudes that the world owes them a living and so on, and you have got to point out you will never beat the system. Doesn't matter what you do, you can do your drug dealing, cash in hand, you will never beat the system. (Tina)

Very often there were key individuals who had made a difference. They were recognised as influential or powerful and were part of the reason why the participant was committed to the community or project. For example, a small portion of time given to someone, being encouraging or having something positive to say could last a long time. Being more visible, perhaps by links to perceived power or authority structures, being more recognised or acknowledged by others made it easy for assumptions to be made. They could also be the reason why they had walked away. This could be in noticing professionals or officers having to leave a meeting or event early to be somewhere else, or by the individuals themselves holding powerful opinions about the groups they were there to support.

This for example could elicit surprising reflections that could shape participant perceptions:

...I see it all the time with parents who have very challenging young people.

Is that the parents are seen as obstructive, difficult, this that and the other.

One social worker once (not at this county) said to me at an event about parents / carers and disabled children, not knowing I was a parent 'all these disabled children seem to be born to stroppy parents' ....and it's like 'no, I think they were perfectly normal till they had to start dealing with people like you!'... (Elizabeth)

Participants communicated the limited interest they felt organisations like GCC had in getting to properly know the local and informal aspects of support already provided to and by communities. Yet there was an obvious interest for councils, the NHS and others to have a list of such organisations, to use as referral options and for signposting, benefits from their perspective.

Referring and signposting without relationship was not always perceived as positive:

Maybe once a week somebody will come to our café and say city council sent me because I haven't got any food. What are we supposed to do with that? So, we just give them some food. But it's like how is that situation happening, it makes no sense. (Jamal)

Alan, working for GCC and holding a number of voluntary roles in his local community explained how such attitudes were illuminated very clearly by some participants working more directly with the system:

I've spoken to [a Local Engagement Officer] who said 'get to a parish meeting, this meeting...but don't commit to anything and signpost them somewhere else!'. That jarred with me a little, but I can understand where that's coming from. We had the meeting with LEOs and I listened - but it's like 'groups are worried about tree trimming on this section of the

walkway' ...then you get 'but that's funded through x pot, and they should access that pot - but they should know that already'

It was possible to interpret this response in several ways. Firstly, that there were groups who might make unhelpful demands, there was a risk of committing to them. Secondly, they needed to be directed elsewhere, another connection. Lastly, the issues were not necessarily the ones that mattered, and communities should already know the answer. The same people were just asking for the same things and haven't listened to what's already been communicated. This was a very similar attitude to those working outside the formal structures when reflecting on the relationship with the system. The only difference perhaps was in the wish to be connected rather than signposted elsewhere.

Therefore, these behaviours could create a sense of being done to and not with. Participants were another part of the system, a tool, information source or resource to be utilised, rather than a partner in the relationship. There were certain individuals and organisations that mattered more, had more influence and power to make decisions and refer onto other. They were perceived as more professional and credible. Coupled with the problems faced by and complexity of the system, power appeared to operate at a distance, coming closest when consultation was required. These perceptions had implications for participants' understanding of identity.

## 7.7 Identity

The themes of problems and power triggered lots of questions for participants around their own and organisational identity. These will be explored in the following sections. The challenges faced to overcome problems and the realisation that access to power or influence might be partial, temporary or not part of their experience lead to a degree of self-reflection. This questioning could be complex and detailed. This was different to that explored within the documents selected for the Discourse Analysis, which focussed more on what people could become or was desirable, to be empowered or resilient as an end state. Where identity and behaviours were considered in the Discourse Analysis these would relate to the

identification of problematic aspects and how they might be changed or 'nudged' to more desired behaviours.

For participants, identity and wider relationships generated meanings and a series of internal considerations linked to credibility and authenticity. These often explored the characteristics, loyalty and affection towards place and family. This could begin with common factors influencing their own and others' views. This could relate to descriptive characteristics, in terms of being younger, a woman or of a certain race. It could also cover structural factors in terms of education, attending university or the perceived quality of a place where people lived. Participants therefore reflected upon not just what they did and how, but why, for whom and to what end.

#### 7.7.1 Credibility and how time is used

For those participants involved in more formal roles within the system, such as commissioning, there was a sense that they didn't get the opportunity to see what was happening on the ground or be hands-on. At the same time, those who were theoretically hands on in the community often spent a lot of time raising funds or doing administrative tasks to keep the work functioning. Having to sell yourself to funders and having to sell ideas to the community were important factors, regardless of the extent of engagement or role with the system. Participants could also move between being more hands on and management roles as part of career development, or a desire to explore opportunities.

As Peter described:

...I value incredibly the fact that [youth work] is where I cut my teeth. I think it gives me credibility with some of my colleagues that I sit around the table with. I think it gives me a bit of insight into what really matters in these places that sometimes my colleagues lack.

For those working more directly with the system, identity and time were linked, bounded to a degree, for example with working hours, training courses, meetings, years of service, and contract lengths. Time was linked to frequent changes, with

names of organisations, partnerships, departments, teams or job titles all expected to be altered at some point. This built in experiences to offer opportunities or expectations to learn more, earn more, gain qualifications or progression.

Yet time could represent a very different perception for those in communities:

Even though I have been here years, I have worked the project for twenty years, I am still not quite classified as a [local] person, because [the area] is actually rooted with different families that have been here for years and years and years. (Tina)

Changes and reorganisations were assumed and understood for those working in the system. This was part and parcel of their experience, part and parcel of the managerial world. Roles could be renamed or reinvented, depending on whether it was known if another organisation was also working in the same space. For smaller organisations or informal groups this could present challenges as their 'corporate memory' or ability to plan for succession could very look different, be lost entirely or dispersed within the community.

Working more directly with the system therefore provided advantages and opportunities to maintain links:

I was tasked many years ago to see how we could tap into communities at local level without a huge resource going into it. So, the best thing to do at the time, the police were establishing their neighbourhood policing structure so we piggy backed onto the back of that. (Sue)

This could provide a wider network of support and instilled a degree of individual ambivalence or confidence and assurance that things would be ok, things would continue for many people as normal.

As Alan, a council worker explained:

One of the things I do say - I can remember being told for at least 9/10 maybe 11 years that change is the only constant...but I now add to that in the last couple of years 'but does anything really ever change?'

Yet for those having less direct contact with the system, there was a sense that community work was not as valid as other types of work, less credible in that it operated in a different way and was not involved in the processes leading to change. Responding to these changes might trigger an adjustment in the use of participants' time and period of self-reflection. Such questioning and self-examination could commence from an early age. For example, if one wanted to make a socially just world, what would you do, become a politician, a judge or an activist? If you wanted to learn and be educated about society, what careers were there for aspiring sociologists and what did a sociologist even do?

Having to start again though might not necessarily be by choice or part of wider system plan:

[The organisation] lost its main funding 5 years ago, and in a way it's one of the best things that happened for me. As things were closing down regionally I was faced with...I had to ask myself why I was doing this. Was it for a salary or myself, or was I doing this because it was something deep down within me? (Fatima)

This might then trigger reflection about responsibilities although not in a functional way:

It's about learning responsibility and learning about your own self at the same time and what you react badly to, perhaps why that might be, you gain some support when you're feeling low, or whatever, and asking for help, which is not the general British approach. (Don)

To make sense of change, participants regularly used language of belief, hope and faith. It had been argued the UK coalition government placed a faith in citizens being more than consumers, who could organise responses as the state withdrew (Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012). This trust in the sense of a better future was also relevant and foundational to those working with communities. If the organisation or individual was successful in getting the money, tender, decision, hopefully everything would be worked out after that. The system could be helpful in this regard offering pilot schemes directly to groups, contract extensions or discretionary temporary funding, often approaching the year end.

This would enable the work to continue and reflected the hopes held for those being worked with, in communities:

...so we can just hang on to that and support him with that.... Then that is good and hopefully out of all of it something will come good, because he has got massive potential, if we can just keep supporting him in that way when his parents are not. (Lizzie)

Similar attitudes were found in those working more directly with the system:

...lot of people had lost interest and I kind of just kept it going treading water. At one time I personally was covering five [Gloucestershire neighbourhood] areas out of the twelve. Because it is a labour of love for me, I really believed in it. It was more vocational. (Sue)

For most participants, keeping the faith with a person or policy process, could be based on stories, myths or assumptions. This faith perhaps reflected the absence or limited quantifiable evidence or clear articulation of 'what worked'. What worked might not just mean what worked in terms of the community, but what worked to get the funding or keep the roles in place. Participants used these approaches in what had been described as 'institutional bricolage' where individuals were seen to be '... stitching together a new institutional fabric from what they have to hand'

(Lowndes & McCaughie, 2013, p. 546). This could demonstrate their or others' credibility and, in some ways build trust.

#### 7.7.2 Credibility: why, what and who for?

For those involved in the development of communities, there were many implicit assumptions. Participants working outside of formal organisations were conscious of their own motivations and agendas, and how they might be perceived by others. Were they just apologists for the council or state involved in wider agendas of coercion and consent (Penny, 2016), whose side were they on? Was wanting to be more involved suggesting that they were somehow better, more capable or qualified than others, that they cared more or assumed there was some sort of moral duty? Were they preferred by the system?

There was a balance of three aspects for participants in understanding identity when discussing community. The 'Role(s)' which influenced how they describe community in the context of a job, paid or otherwise. 'Romantic' descriptions linked to the hope and belief in what they thought communities could and should be. Lastly the 'Reality', in terms of how it felt on the ground, and what was really going on.

Balancing the reality and romantic aspects could be difficult:

That kind of tension between what you wanted to be spending your time doing and what you actually ended up spending your time doing, I really struggled with and it took a lot of energy out of me. So by the time I finished it I was pretty much burnt out looking back. (Peter)

Steve, supporting a range of voluntary and charitable organisations across Gloucestershire described how differences were also uncovered between the reality and the role:

Although my job suggests I am involved in community - In my personal life I am not at all and I don't necessarily feel very engaged in things, in the community I've lived in for nearly eight years.

These tensions if unresolved could have implications for resilience and individual capacity:

When I first got involved I tried to do everything, tried to please everybody.

You can't do that, it gets to the stage where you are exhausting yourself, not necessarily with worry, but by trying to get it solved and it is such a sap on your time.....it's hard. (Tom)

These understandings have clear parallels with psychological theories, such as self-regulation and regulatory focus. These consider discrepancies between the beliefs held about 'actual', 'ideal' and 'ought' selves and the tensions that can arise (Higgins, 1987), along with approaches to goals and standards (Brockner & Higgins, 2001). These will be discussed further in Chapter 8.

#### 7.7.3 Making a difference and taking opportunities

Following consideration of identity and participants' view of self, much thought turned to what was they understood as credible and authentic. This as with so many aspects and characteristics of community were something hard to measure, or even necessarily seen as a credible measure by those designing services, or considering the use of qualitative methodologies (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). Aspects would include commitment over the long term, listening and consistency. Many participants perceived these to be influenced by problems, such as regular reorganisation and perceived imbalances of power.

Participants placed significance and weight to recognition of past events and experiences, for example family backgrounds, schooling and lessons learned as their working lives began. These could be both positive and negative, yet participants had an optimism and hope for the future, also reflecting important people from their perspective. These were not necessarily the same important people they perceived held the power, who were prescriptive and needed quick answers.

Such influential people had reflected the authentic characteristics that mattered to participants:

I think it's somebody who's non-judgmental, you know, has an open mind in terms of how things can work and not too rigid in their thinking. I think it's about being empathetic; you have an understanding. (Don)

For example, they might be unconventional and have seen potential qualities in participants, that they had not recognised themselves:

I think that she was a kind of person that was different – I think she was a risk taker. She does things differently. When we first met, I think there were practical needs - she was looking for a trustee. I don't think I was special... (Fatima)

These people had confidence, but took their potential to have an informal impact seriously:

What keeps me going with this?..... Two things I suppose, one is that I have got skills in it now and I know I can do it, I also know that being here in this position ... [a] throw away comment from me - and it's the position not me - to somebody can make a whole difference in their lives. (Tina)

Participants and the people they worked with wanted authenticity, in part to know people were there if they needed them, for example access to the NHS, police or social activities. But they also valued that the person would listen, even if they couldn't do something about it.

Belinda described that an important characteristic was the willingness to let the difficult conversations be uncovered:

This [clinician] was very supportive and very understanding. He would say to my mum 'you have got a right to be depressed and upset', and they had honest conversations, because it is ok to say things about having a [bad] life,

because it is [bad], but sometimes we want, we can carry on if we can express it [pause] and get it out and just say, 'I am feeling unhappy because things aren't really good, but I will carry on with it but I want somebody to take notice of it'. He was really good.

This had implications for whether a person with such qualities would be that which the system and those engaging on its behalf were looking for, desired or could work with given its approach. This created a sense of inadequacy for some participants, in terms of not being good enough if they felt they did not meet this description.

Emma, a younger participant working across Gloucestershire districts in the area of housing and advice, with experience of working with refugees, noted there was a constructive side to becoming aware of that situation too:

...it felt like I had been quite ignorant [of child asylum seekers] and I hadn't known all the stuff that had been going on...I felt like really angered. But in an inspired way - I was like, oh this is really rubbish, this is really bad and I really want to do something about it.

This could be beneficial for organisations within the system, by taking the time to explain what they did and their identity in a richer way, rather than focussing on the things that they might wish others to do. This could be perceived as more inspiring than instructive and linked to the contemplative stages of recovery discussed in sections 8.6 and 8.7. However, participants reflected how day to day life, let alone the system as currently organised could realistically allow the time and space for them to consider all the intricacies and questions in terms of identity and motivation before becoming more involved. However, making space to reflect on the self could have therapeutic benefits for each side of a relationship, bringing awareness of each other's similarities and differences in a given issue (Rizq & Target, 2008).

This thought process was not necessarily undertaken in isolation from others and linked to the final theme of relationships.

## 7.8 Relationships

The state, central and local was often seen as one entity by participants, providing all the things that should be expected by right, were free, or paid for by taxes.

There were therefore, high expectations or optimism for the relationship between participants outside of the formal system, yet low enthusiasm for engagement with the democratic process. Conversely although not exclusively there was a lower expectation of the relationship with a higher enthusiasm for the democratic process from those working more directly within the system. Participants made sense of their worlds through their interactions with others, (Eatough et al., 2008) where relationships could be seen by some participants as having a more equal or shared status. In this understanding, individuals or organisations acted as collaborators and conduits, rather than a relationship based around coercion and control.

Engagement in the relationship was irregular, usually beginning when either side had a reason to, or there was a crisis, rather than a "...two-way street" (Toomey, 2011, p. 13). This created further complexity and contradiction in that many had a sense of what community should be or could do in terms of action, again with high expectations. However, many participants found that hard to explain and consequently the nature of those relationships.

For example, there were quite polarised responses with some participants feeling they were in 'true' or had started off in 'normal' communities. Many others did not know their neighbours, explaining how other relationships with work, travel, childcare and education all used up time that could have been used to get to know others or get involved.

### 7.8.1 Being a member or a representative

The relationships as described by participants linked to the implications of being a member and representative. This was complex, building on understandings of identity, covering honesty and vulnerability, yet at the same time reflecting upon the responses of others. This included an array of assumptions around tacit

knowledge, reputation, history and key personalities. Much of participant discussion reflected on the consequences of their actions, on specific interventions within the relationship as much as influence.

Individuals could hold a series of relationships, being viewed in different ways within the same organisation:

Yes, that's right. I think there are three categories of people I find. There are officers who are very like 'The Councillors they are special people' .... E.g. 'Yes, [Councillor!]... Yes, Yes, Yes!', and those that don't really understand them, not trained, not aware of how things work - and those who are slightly contemptuous of Councillors who think we are a [pain]...and just get in the way. (Tom)

Being a member or a representative was a process that took time, with participants recognising it could take many months many years of regular interaction, living or working with local groups to understand them. Through this they could become accepted, trusted and have personal confidence, to feel empowered and have an impact. This also included the time taken to build contacts and networks in and outside of the system, as administrative, written, financial or legal knowledge was often required. This might not sit with the system expectations and requirements in terms of job progression, commissioning or electoral cycles.

#### 7.8.2 Being known

Given the breadth of activity happening on the ground, and the need to have those with authentic qualities, it was often difficult for some participants to have confidence in their own skills and strengths given the way the system ascribed value. This could subsequently translate into the difficulties of describing their organisation to fit the tender document or application form.

This could be further compounded or contribute to misunderstandings from those perceived as working within the system:

...people sit in their offices and read an application and decide if someone needs money or not, maybe they would benefit from coming out and actually seeing what happens in communities and not just sit in their office thinking they know. Like I said for lots of people they never go outside of [the neighbourhood] all their life because they were little here, grew up here and they die here. (Lizzie)

In some ways, parallels could be drawn between both groups retreating and remaining within their own communities, perhaps suggesting a degree of safety and comfort in continuing with the status quo, existing routines, processes and patterns of behaviour.

These resulting routines could have negative consequences, for example where the administrative process did not fully capture the richness of the individual:

It occurred to me that I am working in a bureaucratic organisation, have a degree, but I'm struggling to get heard...and I'm kept being told 'I know we've got your name wrong, there's a few mistakes in the assessment, that happens but...' .....but I thought 'no,no,no – you don't understand...how can people comment on the accuracy of my complaint when they don't know my son, have never met him?'. (Elizabeth)

Participants explored the chains of events that could build individual skills, not just qualifications. Being known was also as much about being willing to help others that know you:

As much as I challenge I am mindful that the only way I can bring change by getting in to the mind of the person I am trying to reach and say 'imagine this'. Some people I sit with do not know what it means to be black or have

experienced racism. So, I try to take people on a journey, but make it clear that it will be hard. (Fatima)

Unpacking and exploring the journey required a range of qualities, and a willingness or resilience to keeping trying make a breakthrough:

You have then got to be non-judgemental, you have then got to be very calm and not say what you really want to say, do you know what I mean?... calm, non-judgemental, understand their life situation, have some empathy and start all over again. (Tina)

### 7.8.3 Being judged

There were a series of factors that played into relationship dynamics, that were formally or informally understood to have a number of layers. This linked back to the beginning of the chapter where many of the key concepts had common sense definitions, they were things you just knew. These might not necessarily be accurate, but many participants had clear judgements over organisations, committees and individuals. Being known was important, and there was related tension that came with being more known across a network of relationships. A judgement, evaluation or decision could create a narrative that lasted a long time.

This often related to the bigger quantitative approaches that could justify decisions or provide the basis for descriptions of communities. The data for example could be in place based on a collection which had ceased many years ago. Yet alongside this there was a clear recognition of how personal interventions from others, such as a chair of a committee, champion of a cause, helpful manager or individual could also bring change and have a greater impact, in both positive and negative ways.

These layers could reflect contradictory tendencies in the relationships:

I knew there would be that kind of tension between 'we are all in this for the community's good aren't we?'...and then fighting over resources. (Peter)

This linked to some of the broader contradictions of community work. On the one hand, there was a degree of implied selfishness by championing a cause or a person. Yet the expectation remained of a benefit that in some way would be selfless, an authentic characteristic of a person working in that field. This could be through the commitment to stay and work there, rather than take a 'proper' job.

At a personal level other contradictory tendencies could also be seen.

Understandably, being known and judged was a sensitive area. Particularly if it related to areas where a person might need help or support. Talking about being in such a situation from a theoretical point of view was one thing, but then following that through in practice was not straightforward.

There was a sense of embarrassment, unease or even shame when considering acceptance of support:

Although I support that [social prescribing] from a professional point of view, I would hate that from a medical point of view, if I was in that scenario I just don't feel that I would engage in that at all. It just would not be the way that I would go about it. 'Just give me the pills pal, and I'll go home'...and hopefully I feel better. Yes, but from a professional point of view I recognise that is not the way that we can continue as a society, but I just find it really difficult....It was often the community based stuff that falls into that category. (Steve)

This linked to the nature of identity that was valued, such as perceived strength or weakness, whether they were parts of the problem or solution and not least how those perceptions might be played out in wider relationships. This as in other areas could have potential consequences for the participant or their organisation. The medical solution was private, simpler and functional, whereas the community solution could be public, complex and relational. This created a fear around being known and being judged.

## 7.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the complexity of meanings for community, empowerment and resilience. Analysing and critically evaluating such conceptual complexities and their role in the development of communities in Gloucestershire during a period of austerity, were key aims of the research. The meanings were set in a context of change and could generate actions and feelings that appeared contradictory. The use of IPA generated new insights into the participant understanding of these concepts. The approach supported the second aim of the research, which sought to explore the processes of resilience and empowerment. Using IPA indicated that the views held and described, particularly regarding self, in terms of participants' beliefs led to a fluid relationship between the four themes of Problems, Power, Identity and Relationships.

Even within these complexities there were many aspects of convergence where participants working directly or indirectly with the system had similar motivations, understandings and feelings. Whilst some of this similarity was due to the broad, vague or simplistic usage of concepts, they were not necessarily interpreted or prioritised in the same way. This could create expectations leading to misunderstandings and disconnection.

Whilst much may seem challenging in the nature of the relationship, communities were still seen as a valuable and positive concept. Participants and their wider networks were engaged, the activities were compelling. There were 60,000 informal carers estimated to be providing support, with large numbers of groups and key individuals known to participants across the county. These influential individuals were having an impact now, and as part of the participants' personal histories, whatever their background. Whilst the picture presented by participants was complex, the approach uncovered characteristics of empowered, resilient individuals which were quite simple. Being relational, personal and practical was significant and credible. This influenced the extent of individual awareness and acceptance of identity and relationships.

For many participants being empowered and resilient was as much about confidence and courage in dealing with the system as much as the events in their

own lives. Being empowered was desired if not necessarily attainable. It was not clear whether the system would be able to cope with empowered, resilient communities outside of quite a proscribed set of conditions and outcomes.

These findings contrasted with much of the discourse which was in some senses linear. For example, the problems of austerity and an ageing population could be solved by using power. This would create communities that had specific, active, safe or confident characteristics or identities. This outcome was delivered through relationships that were connected and integrated. However, returning to the chapter opening and the interpretations of comments from Tina, participants were perhaps being taken on, or prepared for a journey to a new destination, to be resettled, although the route was very familiar once underway.

The analyses also revealed new insights into perceived continuing patterns of irregular, if not chaotic behaviours. This was both in terms of the way the system operated, and the way individuals and groups responded. This was often in the absence of, or perceived denial, that there was much evidence to support such a continuation of approach. Although in some ways these patterns could be interpreted as an almost addictive or negative cycle, there was a degree of safety and security in knowing about them. Although the expectations and perceptions between the system and communities did not necessarily always apply, there was a degree of theatre suggesting that they did, which supported the continuing approach. Therefore, many participants managed this tension proactively making decisions over time, relationships and identity as they did not want surprises. Being involved in communities and working with the system required an accelerated and flexible understanding of the rules of the game and qualities that were needed.

Yet for all the language of active and confident communities in the discourse, there needed to be a sensitivity to timing and confidence to act quickly and make decisions, assimilate information and communicate with others. These qualities were needed to access funding, solve problems, before getting a desired outcome or decision. Once an individual was more involved time remained a factor, for example the limited time to acclimatise to new meetings, networks and monitoring.

This approach created a sense of perceived ignorance of the work some participants undertook and their lives, which was ultimately disempowering. Therefore, the knowledge of participant resilience was felt to be undervalued, in terms of what they contended with just by doing their job, or by living, working or volunteering in an area. Such attitudes or assumptions reinforced the sense of confusion or even chaos within the system, creating unrealistic or unhelpful expectations.

The implications for these findings, and their connections with the discourse will now be explored in Chapter 8.

## Chapter 8 - Discussion

### 8.1 Introduction

The research studentship as originally advertised and explained in Chapter 1, sought to explore the impact of County Council policy on the development of active and empowered communities. The policy in question was stated as the 'Meeting the Challenge 2, Together We Can' three-year strategy (MTC2). The aims for the study subsequently agreed with the supervisory panel were twofold. Firstly, to explore the processes of resilience and empowerment alongside social and political discourse. Secondly, to understand their relationship and role in the development of resilient and empowered communities in Gloucestershire, during a period of austerity. The choice of approach was selected to complement the numerous positive examples of practice and experiences in place or planned within Gloucestershire, commissioned by GCC, and offer an alternative lens or voice. The research explored the meaning of experience as described by participants alongside the discourse as articulated within a range of texts. Understanding the differences in impacts between processes and attributes, structure and agency provided a range of insights. These could assist in the synthesis of existing information, viewed as a potentially important aspect and realistic expectation for engaging in policy based research (Greenhalgh & Malterud, 2017). The research generated overarching themes of problems, power, identity and relationships, which explored and uncovered key findings of convergence and divergence in the meanings of community, empowerment and resilience.

The findings supported previous research in terms of understanding the importance of complex relationships between politics, policy making and the state (Greenhalgh & Malterud, 2017; Hay, 2014a; Hills, 2017). Analysis of the discourse recognised the parallel aims of policy development and community development. For example, both were understood to be inherently political and often sought to articulate the case for a vision of the future requiring present actions, justified on the basis of past experiences (Emejulu, 2015; May, 2017a). That the findings provided awareness of the descriptions and meaning of identity, reflected discussions within areas of social psychology, concerning theories of self-discrepancy and regulation in

terms of the actual, ought and ideal selves (Brockner & Higgins, 2001; Higgins, 1987). Both demonstrated the importance of self-awareness in the construction and content of communications for both the sender and receiver before making decisions and taking actions, with the resultant impacts on the quality of relationships. From the analysis there was a disconnect between policy and experience, a divergence in communication styles, leading to potential disagreements over expected or appropriate action. This chapter will discuss the findings in parallel, which in conclusion propose a rediscovery of relationships between the state and communities. This will explore the opportunity to consider and understand the place of empowerment and resilience, through an increased focus on recovery. Recovery as a concept is of importance and had been described as significant in bringing a more meaningful and realistic approach to change (O'Donnell & Shaw, 2016; Stuart et al., 2017). The position of this chapter in the context of the thesis is illustrated in Appendix 30.

## 8.2 The complex, contradictory and changing context

Given the numerous organisations, groups or individuals with an interest in or perspective on community, the context for the research from both sets of findings could be described as complex, contradictory and changing. For GCC, the 10 years following the 2008 financial crisis had seen a series of political and policy changes, events and inquiries that had influenced its approach towards the communities it served. The selected texts represented a wide body of thought and opinion, as did the participants chosen for their wider links across a variety of networks. The findings showed how difficult it was to simplify complex issues, take action and bring a shared sense of change in terms of local relationships, particularly in an environment where organisations and ideas were regularly re-presented, redefined or re-prioritised.

For example, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had become the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The name change "...reflects this government's renewed focus to deliver more homes and build strong communities across England..." (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2018b). In addition, the Department of Health had become the

Department of Health and Social Care and the next phase of the Grenfell Tower inquiry had begun. Raynsford (2016) had noted the increased amount of major legislation affecting local government since the 1980s and the period of the studentship saw an increased complexity, with devolution, combined authorities, sustainability and transformation partnerships, accountable care, integrated care systems and Brexit all vying for attention in national and local media.

At the time of writing reforms enacted as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 were also being reviewed. This had the potential for a future set of reorganisation and reform linked to calls for longer term funding for the NHS as it approached the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its creation (Institute for Public Policy Research, 2018). Therefore, the context as described through the findings supported previous descriptions of the system and the approaches to structure, integration and economic development as something of an obsession (Local Government Association, 2017, p. 14; Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012), as with academic concerns over the relationship between structure and agency, rather than agency itself (Lowndes & McCaughie, 2013).

Locally the MTC strategy had also been through a series of updates and changes during the period of the studentship. These could reflect internal and system priorities and to an extent, shape external communications and relationships with communities. The original MTC strategy noted the financial pressures and need to save money across services (Gloucestershire County Council, 2015b), with subsequent updates describing the opportunities afforded by devolution to join up services (Gloucestershire County Council, 2016b) and the protection of the most vulnerable people (Gloucestershire County Council, 2018b). The most recent update noted the case of Children's Safeguarding Services in Gloucestershire, which following an 'inadequate' inspection judgement from Ofsted had seen an additional £18m of funding allocated within the GCC budget as part of its Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Whilst at national and local levels the messages could be consistent in terms of the range of issues, they were wrapped up within a complicated system, making it difficult for participants in this study to always know how, what and who they were

building relationships with. Given this environment, ensuring that County Council policy such as MTC2 could be visible and understood was a challenge.

Appearances of contradiction were linked to the sheer volume and breadth of material and commentary on community and related concepts such as empowerment and resilience. This proved a challenge for participants working in the system to have confidence that certain services or schemes had the proposed impacts, or that they were qualified to make such judgements. At the highest level the often unquestioned and simplified assumption was that more could be achieved with less, a hopeful optimism linked with expectations of increased efficiency and capacity. Community therefore had an enduring prominence, notwithstanding the very different meanings between the texts and participants. It was also often unchallenged as a term given its common sense understanding and ambiguity. This saw it viewed as a positive concept with implications for delivering more, often through its collective rather than individual meaning. From both approaches there was a shared understanding of hope, suggesting there was more potential capacity rather than in terms of actual activity. Therefore it could be helpful, even powerful, supporting claims in the literature in terms of its usefulness for politicians and policy makers to deploy (Tait & Inch, 2016), particularly when linked to place. Using community as a term suggested credibility, hope and offered solutions to problems described as facing society, particularly in times of crisis. Yet this application, when added to the entrepreneurial and oppositional nature of politics and policy development could create what felt like an almost impossible field to navigate or understand.

At its broadest level the state had been described as “...everywhere and nowhere” (Jones et al., 2013, p. 35) or “...neither real, nor fictitious” (Hay, 2014b, p. 459). Therefore, it was unsurprising that exploring its role, what could be developed or what worked offered much opportunity and scope for policy development. However, this added a potentially bewildering array of considerations and confusion for those wishing to engage willingly or otherwise whether by choice or not, with the aims and intentions of policy.

For example, policies were expected to be evidence based, yet the transparency of evidence used in policy making remained a challenge, which could further contribute to disconnect between the state and communities. Within the discourse and local discussions, the need for delivery at scale was advocated, yet personal choice would also remain. Personal choice was restricted as small organisations struggled to compete therefore needing national, or local organisations such as the VCS Alliance or Forest Voluntary Action Forum to speak on its behalf. On the one hand individuals were torn between a range of expectations, for example they needed to be independent, yet also connected. Engagement and involvement were important, yet the perception remained that decisions were there to be rubber stamped rather than challenged. Financial positions were challenging, savings had to be made, yet increased investment and resources were found at times of crisis, service failure or for structural reorganisation. Demand for health services were increasing, causing problems for the system, yet patients with long term conditions were estimated to only spend 1% of their time in contact with health professionals (NHS England, 2014). This made it harder for participants to assess what the specific problems were or solutions that might require their engagement to support.

Access to health and care was argued to influence around 10% of population wellbeing (The Health Foundation, 2017), yet the NHS and healthcare funding and the CCG was seen to drive much of the national and local agendas, along with the related budgetary decision making, particularly with regard to Adult Social Care. This perceived unequal relationship, between the NHS and Social Care was one of many power relations articulated at a surface level. These perceived inequalities could arise organisationally between the CCG and GCC, GCC and Public Health, or in terms of roles paid or volunteer, commissioner or provider, clinical or administrative, health, psychological or social work professions. They could also manifest in terms of identity, such as age, gender or ethnicity, with place also being a factor. Therefore, the perceptions of the source of communications, be that from a written text, speech or delivered in person might not always have the intended reception or be seen as credible from the receiver's perspective. This was further

compounded by the various barriers in terms of timeliness of access to, and transparency of information.

Yet for the regular flow of initiatives, inquiries or structural changes described there was the sense on closer inspection, from both sets of findings, that much had stayed the same. This was a familiar pattern and as noted throughout the thesis, though many initiatives were reported as 'new', this was not necessarily the case. Either such aspects were re-presentations, or the discourse had stayed silent on or omitted to explore previous events. The exceptions arose when seeking to mark a proposed change in policy direction or in response to a particular tragedy, where it became important to reach out in a relational way and note the need for change. However, often this was short lived and saw a resumption of previous approaches. This reflected participant experiences and could have implications for the understanding and actions taken by organisations or individuals. Those more experienced, recognised and accepted the position, those less experienced, potentially re-treading similar paths to similar effects. In both instances the likelihood of change was minimal. How such a complex environment could be described is illustrated in Appendix 31.

This position as described within the participant experiences, could also reflect the nature of review or scrutiny particularly where government was involved. For example, in the case of bodies charged with parliamentary post legislative scrutiny, such as the UK Select Committees, small and, or, medium sized recommendations were more likely to be made and subsequently accepted. Caygill (2017), argued in terms of post legislative scrutiny, by reviewing 17 select committee reports and their recommendations between 2005 and 2016 that only 2 out of 417 during the period called for large actions. This reflected the need to compromise (i.e. a weaker recommendation was more likely to gain internal cross-party support, therefore perceived externally as more powerful and then subsequently more likely to gain government acceptance) and the lack of evidence on which to base a stronger recommendation. This could perhaps offer an insight into the perceptions of continued change in the discourse in terms of descriptions and initiatives, yet the continuing feelings of a cyclical nature of events experienced by participants. As

outlined by Theresa May in her speech on the Shared Society (2017a), there was a sense described of decisions regularly being taken elsewhere, but it was not clear why.

This had relevance for how collaboration or joint approaches could take precedence over evidence, and that such shared activity could intuitively be linked to common sense understandings of community or togetherness. Although collaboration and joint working were argued as the way forward within the discourse, its potential to be rooted in compromise could dilute its intended effects. As will be explored through this chapter, the narrower range of specific commitments for engagement and action in practice implied a sense of security and resilience developed through familiarity and consistency. The system, its behavioural norms and networks therefore could be seen to control and regulate the extent to which organisations had a freedom or felt empowered to act. This pattern had parallels with addictive, compulsive, even compelling patterns of behaviour, set in the context of a perpetual cycle of crisis. Both approaches explored how these patterns were described and experienced, through sudden increases of funding, name change, re-organisation, creation of scheme or removal of a process. This could filter through the committee systems and personal networks with varying speeds and levels of visibility or understanding for those within communities. Depending where and when the changes happened could also influence the extent to which certain groups or individuals had more information or knowledge, shaping their engagement with the state and also creating the perception of having an 'inside track' or being favoured by commissioning organisations.

The context and analysis of both approaches supported previous acknowledgements of the enduring use of localism and community within policy debates. These debates blurred the use of concepts such as global, local, autonomy and democracy. Combining the analysis of texts and participant interviews ultimately brought the limits of the state into focus in using its power when trying to reconcile concerns (Painter et al., 2011). Whether viewed across a spectrum of opinion, from a top-down neoliberal lens and influence within the discourse or a bottom-up collective action view from groups of participants, this demonstrated

how disconnects in communications or expectations between what was said and done could arise. This had implications for the eventual outcomes and progress that could be claimed as realised by either side, but also the extent to which trust might be generated.

#### 8.2.1 Dominant discourses and participant understandings of community, empowerment and resilience

Therefore, as explored in the chapters 6 and 7, the use of language highlighted a series of disconnects between the discourse and participant experiences. That there was a disconnect was not in itself surprising, given the broad scope of the concepts. Firstly, definitions were not always provided within the texts selected for discourse analysis. To do so could have helped in providing context for policy intentions or a degree of transparency in terms of the desired outcomes and subsequent evaluation of success. Participants however either did not use terms such as empowerment and resilience, or in the case of community it was found surprisingly hard to define on an individual basis. This position arguably reflected the range of understandings of community, empowerment and resilience within the academic and policy literature already highlighted as complex and contested (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013; Carpenter et al., 2016; Cornwall & Brock, 2005; Lowndes & McCaughie, 2013; Maythorne & Shaw, 2013). Therefore, unless communicated with a degree of detail and explanation, for example offering clarity on intended application at an individual, organisational or group level, they could easily be misunderstood.

However, to address these would have taken time, commitment and a willingness to share more information and in more depth, by also being transparent on both sides. For example, this would require those in the state, already very busy, choosing to come out of their offices, perceived as distant, on a regular basis and build relationships. For those in communities, also busy, it would require time to help others understand or imagine what it was like to be them. For many participants therefore, prioritising the needs of the system was not without challenge. This could be particularly difficult where multiple formal and informal roles and responsibilities were already held, along with feelings of being stretched

and under pressure. Judgements to continue with the status quo could therefore be based on previous experience, lack of evidence, yet practically unrealistic given the operating model of the system and personal life circumstances. These findings supported challenges in the literature regarding complex adaptive systems, and that government needed to “...learn to let go and learn how to learn” (Parsons, 2002, p. 9). This had implications for the recovery model as explored in section 8.6.

As explored within chapter 6, the analysis of texts highlighted three main discourses when considering community, empowerment and resilience. The three discourses and participant understanding were supported by, and set within the context that was complex, contradictory and changing. From the system and policy development perspective this context could be seen to support the discourse, providing a backdrop and justification for actions and approaches that could be deployed depending on each case. For the participants the context often reflected the perceived behaviours of the system and those working on its behalf. This position is outlined in Table 6:

**Table 6: Three discourses of community, empowerment and resilience**

Discourse	Enabler	Primary Context
The discourse of acquisition	The use of financial and technical language in describing communities and their development, to address problems and offer solutions	Complex
The discourse of the common good and common sense	The use of definitions to describe functions of communities, their identity and relationships	Contradictory
The discourse of transformation	The presentation of ideas describing ‘new’ problems, alongside ‘new’ powers and services to offer solutions	Changing

These discourses therefore were primarily functional and technical in their utilisation with a financial emphasis in terms of outcomes. Empowerment and Resilience were generally applied and understood as resources to be acquired, specific positive attributes would be harnessed and increased to aid transformative processes seeking to solve problems at a community level. The processes sought to solve problems of excess demands on service delivery or more general resource constraints. The participant interviews however were personal and practical in their usage with a relational emphasis. The approaches therefore raised questions over whether the concepts were understood as commodity or community based, relational or functional. The concepts were not commonly used within participants vocabulary, with resilience or being resilient having most resonance or familiarity.

For participants the concepts were described indirectly more as attributes shaped by a range of experiences, through which participants found the ways and means cope (another term for resilience) and gain confidence (another term for empowerment) to have options, life choices or chances. The motivation to work with communities was often driven by direct familial or caring responsibilities. Participants understood the personal impact of situations or the harsh realities of what would happen for others in their various communities, if support was removed, which was often shaped or reinforced by personal or professional experiences. The awareness of this potential threat remained a regular tension to be coped with or tolerated by participants.

#### 8.2.2 The use of community, empowerment and resilience

Perhaps unsurprisingly to make sense of such a context and communicate the desired outcomes, the use of community, empowerment and resilience were regularly employed as umbrella terms by the state (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013; Public Health England, 2015). This approach recognised the ambiguous (Mayo et al., 2013; Newman, 2014), bewildering (O'Mara-Eves et al., 2013), even chaotic (Rowson et al., 2010) usage when describing or outlining plans for the development of communities.

Therefore within the texts and discourse the key concepts could be described as a series of buzzwords or fuzzwords (Cornwall, 2008; O'Donnell & Shaw, 2016). These were employed in a way which appeared to offer a different type of credibility to that as understood by participants. This usage simplified the complexity and managed apparent contradictions. This could be described as providing the conceptual glue, or justifications for change across a policy cycle that blurred a range of intentions and outcomes (Head, 2010; Strassheim & Kettunen, 2014). Empowerment was noted by some participants as being meaningless, whereas resilience had more of a consistent use and understanding.

The continual stream of publications, updates, reports or policies concerning communities were used to justify or explain history, for example in terms of the problems or chaos inherited from past administrations or as a signpost back into a romantic notion of the past. They could explain the current crises faced across

many areas of the public sector, offering 'new' solutions or highlight future threats to the operation of community life and the wellbeing of citizens. This output created a discourse which has been thematically described within the thesis as a specific set of problems, means to access power, desired identities, skills and relational connections required to participate in defined solutions. As will be seen later in the discussion, participants also shared an understanding of these themes, but were interpreted in different ways. For example, the challenges of demand and capacity were recognised by both approaches, but their descriptions, definitions and translation into daily life were different.

Whilst the key concepts and their scope of use created an overwhelming case for change within the discourse, for participants, the focus on the policy, or the strategy was not a central concern. Some participants, mainly those operating within or in a close relationship with GCC had heard of MTC2 in some shape or form, perhaps via a request to attend a consultation. It was rare however for the system or GCC to be described by participants in a way that demonstrated its impact in making communities resilient or empowered. This in itself did not reflect a consistent criticism or judgement over lack of activity or effort, but perhaps was to be expected given the regular communicated themes of 'stepping back' and requirements for others to 'step up'. This could also represent an acceptance of the limits of what the state could achieve, cheering from the sidelines as an interested observer rather than playing the game itself (Dillon & Fanning, 2013). Few however, even those working within GCC, knew who their GCC Local Engagement Officer (LEO) was, in terms of a personal contact that could have been recognised as a consistent face of the MTC2 strategy. As with theorising within the academic literature, the state could be 'everywhere' in terms of the application and functional use of community, empowerment and resilience, it was perhaps closer to 'nowhere' in terms of its transparency or relational accessibility.

Therefore, depending on the extent of clarifying detail and context, the recipient could easily make assumptions or be confused in interpreting which community was being addressed, or the type of empowerment and resilience that was being discussed or offered. This reflected the extent to which the concepts such as

resilience had any specific meanings at all (Chmutina et al., 2016), or were just instruments used to achieve functional goals rather than build relationships.

Whilst much of the participant experience might seem challenging in terms of the nature of relationships between communities and the state, communities were still seen by all as a valuable and positive concept. Participants and their wider networks were engaged, the activities they described were meaningful and compelling. There were approximately 60,000 informal carers estimated to be providing support within Gloucestershire, with large numbers of groups and key individuals known to participants across the county. These influential individuals or 'Boundary Spanners' were having a current impact, and as part of the participants' personal histories, whatever their background. Whilst the picture presented by participants was also complex, the characteristics of empowered, resilient individuals were quite simple. Being relational, personal and practical was central - and credible. This influenced the awareness and acceptance of identity and relationships.

In terms of a relationship with the system, most participants were therefore finding ways to accommodate its needs, working in spite of, rather than as a direct result of the efficacy of proscribed activity or policies. Therefore, whilst resilience was arguably present on both sides, this was perhaps a resilience of the system to carry on using similar approaches and reinventing 'new' initiatives in the absence of clear evidence to do so. For those in communities, there was resilience therefore to continue engaging with such processes. This could result in particular efforts, for example focussing on bid writing to answer the questions posed by commissioners. Yet alongside this, there was ambivalence to an awareness of whether they would or could ask questions of commissioners as well.

This continual cycle, or pattern of behaviour suggested the need for greater consideration of the efficacy of approaches and impact, rather than assurance that existing ways and means were maintained. For example, internal discussions within agencies could take place over 'hard to reach groups' often defined by the state in terms of a particular group characteristic or identity. Empowerment had been optimistically defined as a shift of power and control away from public services to communities and groups that were seldom heard (Think Local Act Personal, 2016).

However participant groups being hard to reach could often be the result of inappropriate and continued selection of methods, language, timescales or approaches employed to try and engage. This was perceived to result in increased access to the same types of responses or familiar groups. Initiatives in Gloucestershire, such as ‘the Peoples Panel’ were judged by some participants both internally and externally to GCC as flawed, in terms of its creation, selection of membership and ongoing development. In summary, resilience could be seen to support the maintenance of the status quo, with limited empowerment on the part of communities to act unless within prescribed parameters.

### 8.3 Reflections on the approach

The area of originality in this thesis was linked to the choice of approach. Whilst a qualitative approach was not unusual, choosing a combination of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and Discourse Analysis was novel in this area. To date using these two approaches had not been undertaken in the area of local government research. This approach was intended to complement other sources and methods already employed to GCC, for example the JSNA, or evaluations of other local services or schemes, such as the Social Prescribing Service or ‘Active Together’ grants. Other approaches, such as the use of surveys, consultations or larger quantitative datasets were less idiographic. These therefore were arguably less empowering in terms of providing time and space to explore participant histories or voices in a setting chosen by them and on their terms. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis sought to explore the experience of living through a period of austerity. This approach showed the similarities, differences or disconnects between a predominantly functional, financial and technical awareness within the texts and that of an emphasis towards a personal, practical and relational awareness from the interviews. Building on the review of the literature and the findings, the nature of this relationship and its repetitive cycles could be traced back and seen as contested for decades, even generations. From the creation of the welfare state, CDPs and Big Society there were tensions arising through state and community interactions (Cameron, 2010; Hills, 2017; Loney, 1983; Timmins, 2001). As explored within the earlier chapters of the thesis,

approaches that were more relational, being directed by and not for communities had remained of interest to policy makers across areas of government. These it was hoped would provide greater resilience and better outcomes given funding constraints (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, 2015).

#### 8.3.1 Reflections on the approach and studentship setting

The studentship itself was in some ways a product of the policy environment it sought to explore. Firstly, it had broad expectations to deliver against academic and practical requirements, to provide tailored outputs. Secondly the questions had to simplify and deconstruct a complex area. Thirdly, the studentship was centred on a strategy (MTC2) which theoretically set the context and boundaries within which the research would take place. MTC2 represented the culmination of internal effort and political debate to agree a way forward that could be translated into a document suitable for external consumption. That the strategy was largely invisible or irrelevant to various participants was not surprising perhaps. This was mitigated in the research design by the wider selection of texts that offered a broader insight into the policy context in which MTC2 had been developed. This also recognised the array of texts available from sources that would or could influence councils in terms of the processes of empowerment and resilience and therefore by implication impact on to communities. However as will be discussed further in section 8.5, seeking to engage with the state to uncover exactly what a particular strategy, policy or statement might have meant and the basis on which claims were made presented challenges.

Using Discourse Analysis helped to explore the framing of empowerment and resilience as separate processes, which did not always reflect their interactions between each other, wider relationship within recovery or the significance of personal attributes. Where they were joined, particularly prominent in some of the local GCC and GCCG texts they were still not fully articulated or had relevant criteria. For example, within previous iterations of the MTC2 strategy outcomes framework, Outcome 4 'active and resilient communities' had 16 metrics, of which over half related to road safety and highways (Gloucestershire County Council,

2015b). However, the latest update to the 'Together we can' plan, had a new core dataset from which any reference to empowerment or resilience was absent. This in part perhaps reflected the challenge and reality of choosing indicators and using evidence, judged against internal priorities. Discourse Analysis therefore helped to track the regular shifts in emphasis and use of language, which highlighted the challenges noted by participants in understanding the aims or intentions of the state.

### 8.3.2 Reflections on the phenomena

Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis helped explore the participants sense of confusion, inadequacy or lack of credibility that could arise from a perceived inability to understand, cope with or influence such a complex system. This could shape the extent that they perceived themselves to be resilient or empowered. For example, current GCC values of a "...focus on citizens/communities" and people (2018b, p. 7) had replaced 'helping communities help themselves', with 'Active Communities' as a priority area replaced with 'Building Sustainable Communities'. Selecting the two approaches therefore highlighted how ideas could be re-presented, tightened or loosened in terms of focus. These updates, whilst making sense, being minor or stylistic from a policy writer's perspective, could be a hindrance rather than helpful in developing the relationship with communities.

The phenomenon of living through austerity defined a specific timescale being linked to national government spending cuts and local government responses (such as the MTC2 strategy). Yet, this did not necessarily recognise or validate the depth and breadth of experiences for those often living and working in communities. This had the impact of reinforcing a range of ideas, approaches and desired outcomes that appeared compelling, almost addictive in their continued selection and application regardless of whether the available evidence and tacit knowledge suggested otherwise. For participants, meeting the challenge of financial struggles and difficult decisions over the services and support they could provide was part and parcel of the ongoing experience of community development. This also reflected long standing approaches to gaining insight, for example in the use of

survey questions that might reinforce the status quo (Jennings et al., 2016). Therefore, using different approaches and asking different questions helped uncover a series of participant considerations over whether it was of benefit or relevant to work in, with, or even against the state.

### 8.3.3 Reflections on the phenomena, studentship setting and approach

The research therefore employed a dual approach. This considered how the collective story around the development of communities within the selected texts was described and presented. This story had a prescriptive narrative highlighting challenges and needs to be addressed through change, offering an optimistic conclusion. Using texts selected for discourse analysis enabled the use of a wider range of sources, which helped explore and describe the way in which GCC policy was shaped by national events. This demonstrated the way in which the dominance of particular discourses generated perspectives often disconnected from the priorities and practices of everyday life. However, for participants the interviews explored how it was often these everyday activities that supported resilience and empowerment. This aligned with wider research across the community regeneration and development literature recognising the importance of the everyday, not just to the communities themselves, but to Governments seeking to tap into this capacity (Andres & Round, 2015; Carnegie Trust & Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015).

One of the challenges within the research was to use an approach which could provide some insight into 'what worked', yet also encouraging reflection over 'how' things might have worked. Whilst often larger scale, 'scientific' approaches were deemed as more robust, the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis offered initial insights and challenges arising from individual, small scale cultural impacts. These could have larger consequences if not listened to, reflected upon and action taken. For example, in practice within the emergency planning, preparedness and resilience field the 'Step 1-2-3' method is commonly applied (Home Office, 2015). This outlined how when only one person was affected by an incident with no obvious cause, standard protocols were followed. If two, then caution was advised with consideration of options. If three people were affected,

(as seen in the events in Salisbury and Amesbury, UK regarding the use of Novichok), then there was likely to be an incident with rapid assessment and actions required. That the findings ultimately highlighted factors beyond 'what worked' recognised the selection of the two approaches, each understood as suited to answering questions of 'how' things were made possible or made sense of (K. Dunn & Neumann, 2016; Smith et al., 2009).

Recognition of the power of individuals or smaller numbers was relevant not just for significant incidents, but when exploring policy development, collective responsibility or management decision making. This had been seen through events surrounding the leadership and actions of individuals, such as within the Kids Company review or Iraq Inquiry. Therefore, whilst scale might be of importance in terms of policy or particular areas of research, the meaning, impact and targeted response could be linked to much smaller numbers. How national events, such as the Iraq Inquiry could mirror the themes arising from the approach is illustrated within Appendix 32.

Within the research design, participants were sought who could be defined as 'boundary spanners' having a wider range of connections and reach. As explored in the interviews, public managers and those they worked with often had a key role in operating across boundaries, needing to translate, align or navigate around differences (Quick & Feldman, 2014). Relevant to the selection of all participants were GCC data estimating approximately 10% of the county population had a caring responsibility of some description (Gloucestershire County Council, 2017). In the UK it had also been argued that up to two-thirds of the population were likely to have experienced a mental health problem (Mental Health Foundation, 2017, 2018). Elsewhere in Europe, studies have suggested that between 25-35% of adults had experienced chronic pain of some description (Nizza, Smith, & Kirkham, 2017). Therefore, regardless of size or methodological construction, using in depth approaches to explore empowerment and resilience could uncover important insights from samples pointing towards relevant concepts such as recovery.

#### 8.3.4 Reflections on the outcome of the approach

Therefore, uncovering and interpreting the findings for discussion in an area with seemingly long term and intractable issues was not without challenge. Given that at each step of the process, whether outlined in texts or described by participant, from policy development, through to implementation and experience, a complex series of creative, cultural, even theatrical endeavours were potentially at play. These factors could shape or obscure the extent to which the meanings and expectations of community, empowerment and resilience were influenced, interpreted and mediated. For example all participants, not just the local politicians could be involved in decisions, deals or debates driven by ideological or pragmatic concerns, highlighting concerns within the literature as to how scientific approaches could have limits to their usefulness (Greenhalgh & Malterud, 2017). Further still, officials or think tanks informing policy might only offer a degree of certainty, reflecting the views of particular interests or groups (Jones et al., 2013; S. Shaw, Russell, Parsons, & Greenhalgh, 2015). In terms of implementation those within local government had been argued to weave "...institutional bricolage" (Lowndes & McCaughie, 2013, p. 544) using existing ideas, strategies or structures to reinvent or serve new purposes. For those on the receiving end of policy change and service delivery, a series of informal strategies and places could be employed to assist in coping or fostering kindness (Andres & Round, 2015; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015). Finally, for those tasked with evaluation, this also required a degree of creativity to be entrepreneurial with the use and application of indicators, to in effect sell them as useful to client groups (Seaford & Berry, 2014)

#### 8.3.5 Reflections on the dilemmas of community development

This thesis explored the various intentions behind the use of community, empowerment and resilience in the support, descriptions and justifications of a wide range of desired outcomes at both the national and individual levels. These reflected existing research that described how engaging in the development of community and challenging inequalities brought with it a number of dilemmas (Mayo et al., 2008; O'Mara-Eves et al., 2013). Freire (1996) writing in the 1970s noted how the dilemma of freedom, could be described as a conflict and choices between authentic existence and oppression. For participants this was translated as

a conflict between prioritisation or compromise in the pursuit of credibility. Freire's work explored how education on, and self-awareness of, change could be realised. This described a series of dualities, aspects that also emerged from the research findings and the dual approach. For example, Freire's reflections on whether to be a silent spectator or informed actor had links to the theme of problems. On the one hand the discourse presented a specific articulation of the problems and solutions, showing how these could be described in a financial, functional and technical way. This needed to be imparted to communities to address a deficit and create future capacity. However, problems for participants were more focussed on the way the system operated, made choices and communicated with communities. For example, it was difficult to become informed if information was provided using technical language, consulted upon and communicated in specific ways. This was often as part of a tight timeline and pre-defined process, perceived by most participants as constructed by those who had no long-term experience of the settings or issues they sought to address. This was compounded if the 'evidence' was harder to define, information less transparent and hard to access. On a practical level this illustrated wider concerns over judgements, preconceived ideas or decisions being reinforced and rubber stamped (Department of Health et al., 2016; One Gloucestershire, 2018) before attendance at a meeting. This was influential for both the sender and receiver, but also limited the space for questioning by participants. On occasions they could not relate to, nor understand the presented content. This could also explain the series of informal discussions outside of meetings, tacitly understood as being where the real business was undertaken.

That the problems of definition and evidencing outcomes remain contested therefore was perhaps to be expected. That the context was one of complexity, contradiction and change evoked a sense of challenge and struggle beyond that of austerity and service delivery. Such a struggle of ideas and actions had parallels and relevance to community development. For example, from a 'Freirian' perspective, freedom was "...acquired by conquest" (1996, p. 29), to use military language previously explored in the chapters on Discourse Analysis. This freedom he

suggested to pursue “...constantly and responsibly” (1996, p. 29). Alinsky, recognised the need to challenge the status quo and offer practical options for action.

He noted that community organisers knew:

...life is a sea of shifting desires, changing elements, of relativity and uncertainty, yet [organisers] must stay within the experience of the people [the organisers] is working with and act in terms of specific resolutions and answers... (Alinsky, 2010, p. 107)

The context and meanings of the concepts as explored in the thesis suggested a persistent struggle for definition across the discourse and in terms of experience. The extent to which definitions and descriptions of community, empowerment and resilience had been pursued responsibly, or the even the willingness to explore in more depth was a key concern arising from the findings. This could have significance for the extent to which change, or transformation could realistically become a shared endeavour and experience.

Freire also proposed that the ability to transform a given situation or accept the illusion of liberation was linked to power. The application of power to address the described problems was a key aspect of the functional and financial approach within the discourse. Nationally and locally, this had the appearance of seeking to regulate community development through a complex range of organisational partnerships and administrative processes setting the boundaries for when, what and how issues might be explored and discussed. However, to have real choices, be that as an organisation, employee or member of a community, rather than be told who to be and what to do, impacted upon the personal and practical aspects of participant identities. Ultimately how this process was outworked and experienced had implications for relationships. For Freire, this specifically had meaning for whether individuals and groups would be drawn together or divided. This again could explain aspects of the disconnection and divergence between the sets of findings.

Since Freire's work, additional dilemmas had been explored regarding the capacities of the state, communities and individuals (Lipsky, 2010; Mayo et al., 2008; Rhodes, 2013). These were also reflected in the findings of this research, not least in terms of community development and its purpose as an activity (Carpenter et al., 2016) but also to deliver changes that could be shared and understood in policy and practice.

The discussion of findings therefore will further explore a series of themes which can be summarised as: The divergence and convergence in meaning. The challenges of interpreting what was preached and what was practised. Finally, the nature of the compelling and compulsive relationship, with considerations for potential discovery through an understanding of recovery.

#### 8.4 Key thesis findings: The convergence and divergence of meaning

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the ambiguous nature and overlapping use of these concepts, participants provided a variety of responses and understandings when asked a direct question to clarify their meaning. However, participants as with other IPA studies were able to provide rich descriptions of what the concepts meant to them, even if clear definitions were harder to come by (Silverman, Verrall, Alschuler, Smith, & Ehde, 2017). Therefore, the concepts were understood in personal, practical and relational terms of belonging and caring. For communities this would describe how participants saw resilience in terms of the experiences that had shaped their ability to cope, or empowerment as linked to an awareness of confidence to be oneself. These descriptions could be influenced by a variety of factors, such as family history, identity, employment status or geographical place.

Common-sense or academic definitions whilst numerous and often unquestioned, appeared initially to be considered as less authentic or relevant. Further still, the functional or technical application of concepts could get in the way of, or obscure, participant understanding. Yet, the 'real' or alternative understandings as understood by the participants were recognised as part of a wider tacit knowledge. In a similar way, it was often noted that for any of the key concepts, they were not

necessarily things that were thought about in any detail unless one had the time to do so. Defining describing and identifying specific concepts were not a priority to participants. Most of the participants were motivated by or had ended up working in the area of community development due to a complex series of factors and experiences.

The knowledge and understanding of their daily lives shaped personal perspectives and priorities in terms of what participants considered to be important and in their relationship to the system. However, these personal understandings might not be fully asked for by the system or ventured forth when individuals and groups interacted together. This was similar to the way that emotions linked with self-identity might not be explored, as will be discussed in section 8.4.2.3.

However, there was a limited sense that things would actually change, beyond another reorganisation of current activities and approaches. This often meant that there was little motivation to pursue bringing tacit knowledge into the light. It was better to make the best of mediating an imperfect situation, recognising limits, or to remain below the radar and work more informally where such concerns were less prominent.

#### 8.4.1 Areas of convergence

Whilst much could be seen as disconnected or dysfunctional in the relationship between the system and communities, it is important to note that across both the selected texts and participant interviews there were shared themes. Both sets of findings recognised a series of problems that were faced, requiring attention or action to address and how power or levels of confidence were described as important in order to bring change. The findings showed three key elements that could be summarised and interpreted as influential. These were the tactics employed, tacit knowledge utilised and willingness to build trust. This could shape the value ascribed to particular meetings or individuals that were prioritised or viewed as more likely to get results. Working with communities was an entrepreneurial role, perhaps with more obvious linkages to the private sector or political worlds. For example, similar skills utilised could include brokering deals,

negotiation, compromises, along with shared expectations to make the most of scarce resources.

For example, both recognised the demands placed on them, be that the increasing numbers of vulnerable children and adults requiring statutory support, or the complexity of individuals walking through the door of the community project, known to have a challenging family history. This suggested that regular shared dialogue, rather than the intermittent and often chaotic approach to engagement could prove beneficial, not least because both were also optimistic about the hope for a better future from their respective positions. Hope, whether perceived in relation to existing deficits or continuation of positive activity had been argued to have emotive or therapeutic value (Schrank, Stanghellini, & Slade, 2008).

There was a shared importance of identity, yet divergence in terms of meaning which had implications for the nature of relationships. Disconnects arose where the texts used a series of identities in terms of groups (vulnerable, frail, elderly), and financial constraints as the problems. Therefore, engaging with the system required a degree of resilience, which resulted in self-reflection and examination over what would make participants credible in terms of identity and contribution. This in turn was linked to the outcome for a need for communities to do more and step up. Much therefore could be perceived as assumed or judged by the system in terms of what was required or expected in terms of a functional and functioning relationship. However, for participants their identities or those that they lived or worked with were not the problem, more the system identity in terms of its behaviours and structural complexities.

#### 8.4.2 Areas of divergence

Divergence occurred on number of levels. In one sense the position reflected the psychological notions of actual, ought and ideal selves and the tensions that could arise, originally explored in section 2.4.1. Whilst tensions were generally seen as detrimental, existing relationships - even if dysfunctional - were still perceived as providing some support. This support could be financial, functional or technical, and could not be afforded to lose from the participant perspective. Often this would be

facilitated by a key contact and could take the form of a grant, property maintenance or general advice in terms of navigating the system.

On both sides there were different windows that could influence such reflection. These could be when areas of family life or work had taken a turn for the worse or had broken down in participants' lives. In addition, specific requests to engage or consult on related areas might also trigger similar considerations, although the method and means to do so could be on specific terms that might not encourage a deeper exploration. Specific professional or official individuals would be seen to communicate the context, problems and solutions. This would in turn define the characteristics of organisations and individuals required to move things into a better place. This implied that the now, be that in terms of place or people was in some way deficient. The question for those outside of the system was whether to get involved on the terms offered.

As described, uses of the key concepts were employed as umbrella terms and at a higher and general level in the discourse, for example 'confident' communities, rather than describing characteristics of individuals. Problems however could often be linked to sub groups within communities, for example the vulnerable, or those with medical conditions. Where different constituent parts of communities were discussed these could also be in terms of problems linked to integration, immigration or diversity. Problems could also be linked to the use or excessive demands on services. Participants rarely spoke of being in a specific community and discussions explored the sense that they were part of communities, if they were to define or describe the concept at all. This could have implications in that participants might have multiple associations with the broad use of descriptions as outlined within in the discourse. On a practical level this could influence how and when they chose to engage or the interpretations of activities and behaviours arising from the system or those working on its behalf.

Within the discourse, 'strong' communities could be used to describe the focus of new initiatives, a desired or expected, even increased outcome beyond a defined, present state. Yet for the participants, to be strong was often an ability to cope with personal histories and experiences that could be interpreted as weaknesses which

influenced their day to day lives. To be confident also had similar expectations and understandings, yet for participants confidence was more concerned with personal feelings and options, not what others might suggest you could or should do.

These findings contrasted with much of the discourse which was often presented as a structured, planned process, often in a linear fashion. For example, the problems of austerity and an ageing population could be solved by using power. This would create communities that had specific, active, safe or confident characteristics or identities. This outcome was delivered through relationships that were connected and integrated. However, for many participants to be connected had implications of control by others. There were limits to the usefulness of building networks, bigger was not always better.

However, there were perceived continuing patterns and cycles of irregular, if not chaotic behaviours. This state of perpetual crisis was the backdrop or context in terms of the way the system operated day to day, and influenced how individuals and groups responded, should they choose to do so. These behaviours often existed in the absence of evidence to support such a continuation of approach. The continuation of such a cycle reduced the opportunity and space to reflect the possibility that the behaviours might be part of the problem rather than the solution. This was different to the crises emerging from serious incidents or inquiries. In these instances, there could be a shared need to mark a change in direction or policy, whether enforced or demanded by the public or media. In these situations, there was a greater reflection and awareness of actions and consequences. Either way, evidence was hard to access, either from websites, documentation or organisations direct. This will be discussed in more detail in section 8.5.

From a participant perspective the outcomes of a state interaction or process were not always satisfactory. This could include for example, a complaint or being included in a decision over a funding request. However, there was a degree of comfort and security in being aware or prepared, and having the confidence and commitment to continue regardless of an official judgement. This reflected the

different understandings of what it meant to be empowered and resilient within communities.

Many participants managed this tension proactively as they did not want any surprises. The patterns therefore could be interpreted as an addictive cycle to avoid discomfort. This could result in a degree of theatre being played out amongst individuals and organisations, further complicating, but again reflecting the understanding of actual, ought and ideal selves. Working with the system therefore required a flexible understanding of the rules of the game, and to quickly learn the qualities that were needed to make sense of the systems behaviour. Considering the concept of recovery as a means to explore this position is discussed in section 8.6.

#### 8.4.2.1 Problems

The findings showed that there was complexity in the understanding of problems. From the texts the issues of an ageing and growing population, demand for services and funding reductions were the primary issues. From the participant experience this was understood and reflected an environment they had experienced for many years. Many participants recognised families across a range of generations, which had lived through similar cycles and periods. This had developed a sense of abandonment as services had been withdrawn and an acceptance of an inability to influence. Whilst 'stepping up' could be logical, it did not replace the loss. The problems as they understood them were the increasing complexity of the system, the very specific means by which they had to connect and engage with it. Often these approaches had a negative impact in terms of the language used, for example from requests to 'step up' or an implication of failure or weakness if more could not be done for less.

Reflecting on the analysis of texts, there were problems facing society, problems which were perceived as requiring involvement and action from communities. The period of discourse analysis began with the 'Big Society' agenda, which explained the problems being predominantly one of government, specifically big government and micro management. There were financial decisions to be made, to reduce the

deficit, but the societal problems had remained. Government needed to step out of the way, suggesting a break or abstention within the relationship.

At specific points however, reviews reconsidered the nature of the society to be created and sought to offer an inclusive message. This recognised the discord and associated feelings within the relationship. This was often in response to an external concern, commission, review or event, for example the election of a coalition government or the EU referendum. In each case this offered sobering conclusions on progress.

For example, as suggested by the Prime Minister Theresa May:

...And at the same time, over recent years [ordinary working-class families] have felt locked out of the political and social discourse in Britain. If they voiced their concerns, their views were shut down. Decisions made in faraway places didn't always seem to be the right decisions for them. (May, 2017a)

This assessment used the same metaphor as much of the wider discourse which sought to 'unlock' potential within communities, to make them more empowered and resilient. However, these points of reflection and arguments for change, were set and often lost within the context of regular re-presentation of issues or initiatives being 'new'. This constrained and controlled the extent to which any assessment or evaluation could be undertaken by the state or participants.

#### 8.4.2.2 Power

Consideration of problems triggered a discussion of power. Power from the discourse often considered decentralisation, devolution and diversification of services. The dispersal of power and shift away from government to others in communities was linked to a variety of 'calls to action', 'to arms' or the use of military metaphor to encourage communities to step up or step forward. The shift was also described as a means and opportunity for communities and local government to do what they wanted rather than what central government required. However, once again the seemingly broad ranging agenda for

empowerment was distilled into a very specific set of rights and potential powers to be released, timings and means through which to get involved.

Both sets of findings showed that there was shared recognition over the significance of power, and the need for it to be discussed and considered. However, there was a divergence in terms of the different expectations that raising the subject could bring. For example, the purpose of the power, how it would be used, when and to what end. The texts provided a strong and optimistic message. This communicated that the barriers to giving away power would be crossed, be localised and available to communities. Although government had got in the way of letting the people organise themselves, the government would assist in giving communities the freedoms they required.

Yet alongside this, participants were looking to have influence within the relationship, not necessarily one of dominance or control. This influence could be at any stage of interaction with the state, although there was a recognition that the state may not always be cooperative in letting them act in a more empowered way. However, most were already engaged or committed to an extent they were comfortable with, by nature of work or life circumstances, involvement in caring, volunteering either on a formal or informal basis. This could suggest future pro-social behaviour might be linked to existing opportunities (Gray, Khoo, & Reimondos, 2012) rather than 'new' ones offered by the state. Participants were looking for representatives of the state to be seen to act justly in the present, rather than any personal expectations of social justice being raised in the future. Being seen to act with credibility was as important as acting professionally.

#### 8.4.2.3 Identity

Whilst there was a convergence in the importance of power, the theme of identity was where greater differences in understandings were described. This on the one hand was not unexpected considering the challenges of conceptual definitions and long-term history of problems that had faced community development activity. The texts communicated a very specific set of characteristics that were required to deal with the problems perceived as requiring attention. Communities were to be strong, self-reliant and connected as result of becoming empowered and resilient.

#### 8.4.2.3.1 The implications of identity: desired and assumed

This then had implications for reflections on the identity desired for those in receipt of powers or new services, how or where they would be accessed and by whom.

The discourse emphasised the benefits of personal freedom linked to control over health and wellbeing. This shifted the debate away from empowerment and resilience as they might relate to communities in terms of freedom or to address areas of inequality, social justice or change. Instead the focus moved towards the financial, technical and functional ways in which individuals and communities could support and deliver the pre-existing system agendas and problems.

This approach was often based on assumptions of identity, characterised by need or deficiency judged as present within communities. This therefore could be linked to assumptions of increased capacity and be the basis on which the communities with these specific characteristics could be replicated. Individuals and communities would self-manage and become more empowered and resilient. The language was primarily financial and functional, for example efficiencies could be made in the delivery of care, rather than the use of caring as a characteristic or attribute. Much was required to be built in terms of community, empowerment and resilience, using a range of construction related metaphors in terms of foundations, structures and concrete to develop the imagery of resilience, strength, permanence and stability.

#### 8.4.2.3.2 The implications of identity: expectations

These expectations reinforced participant reflections on the need to have time to think or space to adapt and respond to what the state wanted. If their identity was not seen to fit with these expectations, then there was an assumption that other organisations or individuals were preferred, and that sharing other perspectives was not a valuable use of their time. Further still, that their qualities were not valued, which potentially influenced power relations. Sharing who you really were might not be as effective as sharing what you thought other members of the relationship might wish to hear. Councillors and commissioners for example would also have to consider how events and ideas would play out with other elected members or seek to find a workable interpretation or compromise within the constraints of policy.

Many of the participants and those spoken to in community meetings or events had not made a conscious choice to have a career in community development. Even the term of community development was not regularly used. The role was also made up of a variety of skills and experiences, yet not recognised as having the same value - it was not a 'profession' as such. Therefore, given that and the complication over what community meant, it was not an unsurprising position that could create confusion.

#### 8.4.2.3.3 The implications of identity: questions

This though raised questions as to the extent more established and traditional routes through education could prepare you for a role in community work. As such there was not a commonly shared understanding of what it meant to be them, be that via a recognised pathway or training. This questioning could include reflections on what it meant to be qualified, experienced, personal and professional development, promotion and earnings. These thoughts could link to expectations of joining the housing ladder or having children. This could create a disconnect in commissioners seeking answers from communities yet stimulating internal questions. However, these consequences were not always necessarily realistic expectations or best use of time, given the tension between the fragile nature of short-term activity and long-term efforts required working with communities. If participants did develop new skills and abilities, they might then move on and leave the locality or theme of work behind. This could create practical and personal impacts of that loss and sense of abandonment, to be set against any gains that might have been made. This linked to the analogy of fostering and local government involvement, reflected upon in section 9.3.

This was important because much of the system was predicated on finding ways to define, replicate and then increase capacity. Many participants noted that they were involved in very different areas beforehand but recognised and described the importance of education as either the way out or means through which to provide opportunities for the people they worked with. Given much of the text descriptions of community used financial, functional and technical language, this would need a degree of translation to articulate expectations from a 'career' in community

development, if that was even an appropriate description for something embedded within everyday life.

#### 8.4.2.3.4 The implications of identity: tensions

This was not without tension where long term, intergenerational problems might not fit within shorter planning cycles. Whilst collaboration and integration made sense, practical considerations such as bringing change within networks where politics, prejudice or issues of equality remained was challenging. The absence of succession planning was something seen from the myriad of new roles, restructuring and various short-term funding for projects.

For the participants a wider range of considerations were covered as a part of the exploration of identity. Firstly, in some senses this mirrored the approach of the texts in that there was recognition of a scarce resource. In the case of the texts it was the scarcity of funding, but for participants it was predominantly the use of their time. This generated self-reflections over what it would mean to get involved, their credibility and the reasons why they would choose to do so. This would also represent a personal evaluation of sorts, to consider the gains and losses over what it would mean to make a difference.

These reflections could consider participants' actual characteristics and roles, roles they felt they ought to hold, which could reflect interactions with the state. Lastly there was a sense of the ideal, which covered the more romantic or optimistic views of what a future could or should look like. Each of these considerations supported a wide range of psychological perspectives and theories that could explain factors behind the different types of self-identity, pro-social behaviour, motivations and engagement. Descriptions in the texts could blur all three aspects, of the actual, ought and ideal self, but often utilised the 'ideal' as a counterpoint to descriptions of the 'actual'. Less use of the ought could have reflected a desire from the state to avoid an overly paternalistic approach, in order to support freedom of choice and personal empowerment (Berner & Phillips, 2005; Chiapperino & Tengland, 2016; Sunstein & Thaler, 2003).

#### 8.4.2.3.5 The implications of identity: actual, ought and ideal selves

As noted in Chapter 7, discrepancies between an individual's actual and ought or ideal beliefs of self are argued to induce negative emotions. For example, self-discrepancy theory suggested that differences between beliefs of actual and ideal selves have been associated with the absence of positive outcomes, linked to emotions of disappointment and dissatisfaction. Differences between actual and ought selves have been associated with the presence of negative outcomes and linked emotions of fear and threat (Higgins, 1987). As can be seen from Tables 7 and 8, from both the texts selected for the Discourse Analysis and the participant interviews, it was possible to see how the various types of identity were presented within the discourse. Therefore, the tensions arising might not just reflect the collective struggle to understand 'what' worked, but also the individual struggles in terms of self-identity for the sender and receiver.

**Table 7: Comparison actual ought and ideal descriptions of selves from selected texts**

	Actual	Ought	Ideal
<b>DAVID CAMERON</b>	For a long time the way government has worked - top-down, top-heavy, controlling - has frequently had the effect of sapping responsibility, local innovation and civic action.	It's about holding our hands up saying we haven't got all the answers - let's work them out, together	I want other forward-thinking, entrepreneurial, community-minded people and neighbourhoods in our country to come forward and ask for the same freedoms, the same support too. If you've got an idea to make life better, if you want to improve your local area, don't just think about it - tell us what you want to do and we will try and give you the tools to make this happen.
<b>THERESA MAY</b>	...over recent years these people have felt locked out of the political and social discourse in Britain. If they voiced their concerns, their views were shut down. Decisions made in faraway places didn't always seem to be the right decisions for them.	There are not easy answers to these problems, but it is vital that we come together to address them.	We form families, communities, towns, cities, counties and nations. And we embrace the responsibilities those institutions imply. And government has a clear role to play to support this conception of society. It is to act to encourage and nurture those relationships, networks and institutions where it can. And it is to step up to correct injustices and tackle unfairness at every turn – because injustice and unfairness are the things that drive us apart.

The broad use of descriptions and challenges with definition and evaluation perhaps explained the continuance with the status quo and avoidance of exploring the 'actual' position in more depth, unless choosing to as part of a major policy shift or resulting from an influential event or tragedy. Much of the discourse however, focussed on the ideal descriptions in terms of the type of identity that was promoted.

#### 8.4.2.3.6 Actual, ought, ideal selves: local commissioning

For example, locally GCC and GCCG had decided to combine funding for their social prescribing service originally piloted in 2014, and village agents schemes originally launched in rural areas from 2006. The principle was to commission a new 'community connectors' service under the name of 'One Gloucestershire', one of the various representations of local identity. The context of proposals for the service were based on principles arising from the Enabling Active Communities (EAC) policy agreed and adopted by the Health and Wellbeing Board in July 2015. As with much of the discourse with the texts, the principles were wide ranging,

optimistic and ambitious offering an ‘ideal’ representation in terms of expectations of behaviour. These are noted in Figure 10:

**Figure 10: Community Connectors Market Engagement Event Presentation 2016 - Principles**

**Context: EAC Policy**  
**‘Engaging with Communities’ Principles**

- **An asset based approach:** recognising and building on strengths within local communities
- **A needs-based approach :** giving priority to those whose need is greatest
- **A shared approach:** developing shared solutions that take account of what works in each community
- **A local approach:** local people decide the outcomes which matter the most for their community
- **An empowering approach:** that empowers the individual to take control of their health and wellbeing and promote self-care
- **A partnership approach:** working with all partners to harness existing capacity in the community and grow the community workforce in a sustainable way
- **An inclusive approach:** ensuring that under-represented groups are considered and that communities include all views and backgrounds

From the perspective of participant responses, the high expectations that shaped policy or engagement within the discourse were often a source of tension. These were viewed as unlikely to be achieved or actually held to and had been seen before in different guises. Furthermore, the list presented in Figure 10 showed the various knowledge, skills and experience an individual might self-assess themselves against, in order to make a judgement of their own ability to contribute. Whilst none of the principles were wrong in themselves, this could create barriers to further participation. This could also provide insight into a greater focus on ought aspects of self for participants perceived as on the receiving end of an implemented policy. Notions of an ideal self were secondary to the actual coping, confidence and belonging necessary on a day to day basis. Both approaches however highlighted how there was more depth to these ‘actual’ descriptions, given time to elaborate or if forced to do so by external events. Therefore, the disconnect between the texts, divergence in communication could be seen to create a further complications and tensions. These tensions illuminated aspects of self and the resultant emotions that the psychological literature argued such discrepancies might cause for and between individuals.

#### 8.4.2.3.7 Actual, ought, ideal selves: theory and practice

The theory of self-discrepancy was further developed into that of self-regulation (Hogg & Vaughan, 2008). Regulatory focus proposed that people had two regulatory foci – being either promotion or prevention focussed (Brockner & Higgins, 2001). For example, promotion focussed individuals sought to bring their actual perception of self into line with their ideal increasing the awareness of or absence of positive outcomes. Prevention focussed individuals sought to do the same with their actual and ought selves, increasing the awareness or absence of negative outcomes. For promotion focussed individuals, emotions were on a spectrum from cheerful to dejected. Prevention focussed individuals' emotions could vary from quiescent to agitated. Depending on the focus, behaviours would be modified to match or avoid mismatches between perception of selves based on individuals needs and goals. Understanding individual approaches, reactions and emotional responses to needs and goals had significance for empowerment and resilience, particularly in the context of health and behavioural change (Cesario, Higgins, & Scholer, 2008). In addition, the focus on more positive emotions arising from 'promotion' type descriptions in the discourse and quiescence in the interviews suggested only a partial understanding of the relationship was present. As noted in section 8.4, when representatives of the state and participants were together it was unlikely that the full range of emotions would be shared, or if they were it was unlikely that they would be understood in terms of self-identity, discrepancy and regulation.

The prominence of the 'new' within the texts selected for analysis could for example demonstrate the extent to which the ideal was reflected and communicated through the discourse. These patterns and tensions between selves in some way reflected the view of continuing ideas and lack of alternatives that have seen local politics "...transposed in a tragic key (rather than a heroic register)" (Lowndes & McCaughie, 2013, p. 545). Lowndes and McCaughie also noted the presence of key individuals recognising how they thought mattered, which also reflected the findings within the thesis that 'how' it works should be given more consideration than just 'what' worked.

**Table 8: Examples of actual ought and ideal descriptions of selves from participant responses**

	Actual	Ought	Ideal
STEVE	Although my job suggests I am involved in community - In my personal life I am not at all and I don't necessarily feel very engaged in things, in the community I've lived in for nearly eight years.	If you are seeing something right in front of you, don't pick up the phone pick it up yourself, isn't that easier? I think it would be initially difficult, but actually I think eventually things would sort themselves out and be less reliant on the state if you like.	So I felt when I was talking to her that she was the real deal...I am [in meetings] at [the Council] and trying to do my bit, and that is fine, but she is working with real people who have real issues and supporting them regardless of whether they have been constituted as a group or not.
TINA	Even though I have been here years, I have worked the project for twenty years, I am still not quite classified as a [local] person, because [the local area] is actually rooted with different families that have been here for years and years and years	I always tell them [youth workers] they have got to give a bit of themselves to the young people they are working with, but don't give anything that they wouldn't want on the front page of the [local paper].	Everybody what comes through the door has the feeling that they want to give something back and they want to change the world
PETER	... such is my laziness I am probably not going to find them [community organisations] - they need to find me, and then at the point at which I find them - am I going to feel like I am being connected with a vulnerable person in my community or will I feel that I'm being recruited into some organisation, some of whose values I might share but some of whose values I might have real problems with?	There are clearly groups of people that don't get the same chances as the rest of us and don't get those chances partly because of by accident of where they are born and who they are born to and that doesn't feel right. So yes, that is a strong element of what drives me.	I couldn't tell you a thing about anybody that lives more than one door away these days! ...There is something that I feel I have lost along the way, and actually there is still that sense of going back to a place where people know each other better in a way that we don't here.
SARAH	...my highest number of complaints....anything to do with parking, cars, pavements, speeding...most councillors all agree and find the same pattern...because everybody uses them. Unless you have an illness or a disability cross your family path, then a lot of people are switched off to it...they really are.	Having been to many neighbour disputes, when they come to you, you think there is another side to the story. I'd better check first rather than taking it and running with it.	Community means to me, people who care about each other, and care about where they live.
TOM	Yes, I can be furnished with the facts. But I don't know what the greatest area of need is. I'm not sure. I'm not paid full time, and I don't have time to go through files and files, and stats and stuff. I guess my criteria for it was – how can I affect and support as many people as possible?	What I find quite difficult to deal with is when people come to me with really personal issues, say social services. I don't know what to do – what can I do, what am I supposed to do? The boundaries are a bit blurred.	When do people flourish? When you give people meaning in their life.

In terms of language and in organisational settings, it has been suggested that the more ideals are communicated for example in terms of vision or transformation, the more promotion focussed individuals will be developed. The greater the focus

on responsibilities to each other or transactions, then prevention focussed individuals could be developed (Brockner & Higgins, 2001). The challenge here therefore was that the state and participants were working in a way that could create disconnection, but it was also potentially developing two different focusses amongst its constituent populations. The actions and reactions that could arise were not clearly understood.

However as discussed, the desired characteristics or ideal end states that were most visible concerned economic prosperity, employment and home ownership. Individuals would be strong, confident and connected to others, characteristics that appeared to be valued and required by the system and assumed that everyone wanted or at least could become. Consideration then followed as to how relationships, described through collaboration, integration or partnership could help support these aims.

#### 8.4.2.4 Relationships

The differences in perception of identity therefore created further divergence in terms of how relationships were understood. As with the descriptions of power, there were different expectations of purpose for relationships. The texts described relationships of scale providing efficiency, sustainability or resilience although this expectation was not necessarily borne out by the evidence in the both the academic and grey literature (Dickinson & Sullivan, 2014; House of Lords, 2017a; National Audit Office, 2017).

For the commissioners, they knew there could be requirements to consult, to engage with the public, partner organisations and internal governance structures to achieve a final sign off from the elected representatives. When groups came together to engage or share ideas, it was unsurprising that this could be challenging and present dilemmas in terms of words and actions. Sticking to familiar methods and having contacts with groups that responded to engagement (or at least offered a degree of representation) were unquestioned and accepted. Once the process began, using functional and technical forms of language along with specific types of presentation and formality offered an opportunity to navigate a complex set of circumstances. Short timeframes and internal deadlines also shaped the way in

which the relationship with communities were approached. That this was often seen as somewhat dysfunctional given agendas, preconceptions and the need to achieve organisational results was unsurprising. For those living and working with very difficult situations in communities, there was the sense of simply coping to get through another day. Therefore, in one sense this could explain in part the lower levels of community challenge or explicit offer of additional capacity to be released - if this was there at all.

From a Freirian position the silence on behalf of communities could be due to a lack of education or critical consciousness, but similarly the findings suggested individuals were aware of the tacit knowledge, the deals done outside meetings, meetings where the 'real' work was done. Groups could have sought to engage on previous occasions but to little effect, accepting that therefore less effort was required as the outcome was already known. This cycle could also reflect assumptions and expectations for short opportunities or windows to engage on both sides.

For example, as outlined by Prime Minister Theresa May at the end of the period:

... because Britain is going through a period of great national change [following the EU referendum], and as we do so we have a once-in-a-generation chance to step back and ask ourselves what kind of country we want to be. (2017a)

This usage of a key event provided the justification or means to articulate an assumption over the assessment of the nature of the society. Whilst change was described as happening over a period of time, the proposition was that an assessment be subject to a single window and timeframe, rather than subject of ongoing dialogue. This provided the appearance of an opportunity, whilst retaining the option to maintain control, and was a common function utilised within the discourse and recognised by participants.

Whilst much of the descriptions promoted integration or collaboration as the preferred approach and solution, there was still a lot of evidence that suggested the

benefits were unclear. This was not unexpected given the challenges of definition and measurement, across government (Sense about Science, 2016) even for a high profile, highly resourced scheme, such as Kids Company (National Audit Office, 2015) which raised similar questions as those described by participants over what mattered, rather than what worked.

## 8.5 The challenges of interpreting what was preached and what was practised

As outlined in Chapter 6, from 2010 a principal focus of community related discourse from a governmental perspective concerned the development of the Big Society and Localism. These policy initiatives and subsequent legislation were described as a break from the past and personally associated with the then Prime Minister David Cameron and the Coalition Government. The Big Society had a particular emphasis on community empowerment as a key definition and as a description of the means to redistribute power and bring change. Although these proposed changes reflected a degree of awareness as found in the participant experience, in terms of the limitations of government and the barriers it could create through its operating behaviours, progress was slow. In the years following the launch, reviews of its intentions reflected on the perceived failures. These explored the extent to which it had become redundant, even awkward or unhelpful in framing policy for the UK coalition government (Civil Exchange, 2015; McKee, 2015). Again, similar descriptions were found locally from participants. This difficulty was also reflected in communities, supporting the need for development work and protest to be taken seriously (McCrea, Meade, & Shaw, 2017).

Approaching the end of the current decade the UK government, (again personally associated with the current Prime Minister) signalled the extent to which everyday injustices remained and the notion of a need to once again break with the past to move swiftly and create a 'Shared Society' (May, 2017a). As previously explored, a regular series of events from the Iraq Inquiry, Grenfell Tower, harassment and expenses scandals, use of public funds for Kids Company, and treatment of refugees from the 'Windrush Generation' showed a consistent if potentially disturbing pattern of behaviours across a range of government departments. Disconnects

between expectations of urgent response and business as usual brought into focus ongoing discussions and debate around the connection between policy development, intention and outcomes. These events provided insight into the behaviours that might influence decisions, policies and the nature of the relationship between the state and citizen, not least in terms of who and what really mattered.

Participants in the research sought a personal and relational connection, yet this did not always appear to be shared by government and organisational actions which were often driven by functional and financial considerations. These considerations were apparent across the wider range of texts analysed, all playing a part in prioritising and emphasising specific discourses. This reflected the tensions that could arise in understanding the difference in skills, approaches and attitudes required to empower community action, as opposed to the delivery of services (The Health Foundation, 2017).

In addition, therefore, the extent to which the decision making about, and descriptions of those deserving support genuinely included communities was questioned. This also reflected the extent to which listening, or self-reflection was valued. This influenced the communication with and treatment of groups, which could be seen as disempowering and undermining rather than building resilience. Ultimately evidence for ‘what’ worked or was argued could work, did not necessarily reflect on or offer transparency to explain ‘how’ things worked. The ‘how’ was important to participants in terms of making sense of the relationship from day to day and assessing its credibility.

#### 8.5.1 Timeliness and timelines for action

The sense of a timeline was important as the state and those engaged with it often operated to specific and defined timescales. In effect, for those in communities the merry-go-round was spinning, and the choice was whether to take the risk and jump on. The system therefore, could appear complex from the outside, for those inside, changing, and for both groups contradictory. However, the timescales could also be ideal, unrealistic or opportunistic in relationship to the particular context. These could cover electoral cycles and terms of office, periods of inspection of

services or shorter periods such as purdah before elections, for procurement, consultations or windows for application for funding of any description. Internally organisations worked to a series of committee calendars and department or team meetings, all of which created milestones and deadlines for action.

#### 8.5.1.1 Timeliness and timelines for action: Contradictions

Contradictions were apparent depending on the extent to which different policies, ideas or individuals were perceived as credible. This turnover created the sense of a fast pace, new challenges and a need for action to get involved and solve problems. This in turn generated an often unquestioned need for increasing information, larger networks, use of technology, online platforms and social media. Participants in response needed to decode, distil and then communicate clearly to others in their networks. As noted by Alinsky nearly 50 years ago, it could feel overwhelming reflecting an overload of information that was difficult to assimilate and interpret.

#### 8.5.1.2 Timeliness and timelines for action: Contradictions in local policy and commissioning

For example, in Gloucestershire the procurement for a new 'Community Connectors' service, combined two existing services (Social Prescribing and Village Agents) which demonstrated the speed with which organisations could choose to move at when they were ready to do so. For all involved this would set off a series of communications and commissioning activity to support the process, offering another opportunity to influence the relationship. The existing services had been running for a longer period, with the village agents for many years. The plans for the new scheme made its way through the two organisations administration in 2016 and was then followed by a market engagement event held over a morning in October 2016.

As shown in Figure 11, the timescales for the next steps and actions for organisations interested in providing the service were tight. The potentially optimistic timeline communicated in October was in part due to a desire to avoid extending contracts with the current providers which were due to end. At the time personal communications with the researcher from external participants noted that the timescales had meant that some organisations had not been made aware of the

event. In addition, potential providers noted on the day of the event that it was probably not an appropriate opportunity for them to tender for.

**Figure 11: Community Connectors Market Engagement Event Presentation - Timescales**

**Next steps: Indicative Timescale**

- End of November: Invitation to Tender published
- End of December: Bid submission deadline
- January: Evaluation of Bids
- February: Award of contract
- June: Contract begins

**Further questions/ comments**

Please email: [GLCCG.Procurement@nhs.net](mailto:GLCCG.Procurement@nhs.net)

Whilst the speed of action could have been interpreted it was clear from the commissioning organisations as to what was needed i.e. a lengthy period of engagement was not required, as will be discussed in section 8.5.2 this was not the case. At the same time the state could appear to operate more slowly when individuals or groups sought to engage with it or evaluate activities. This could be the time taken to investigate a complaint, get advice, information or delays due to a withdrawal or change of process. Therefore, this could contribute to the sense of a chaotic relationship in which those participating had little control or power over the events themselves.

8.5.1.3 Timeliness and timelines for action: Contradictions in national policy and commissioning

For example, information was requested by the author from the DCLG on the community right to challenge. This followed the Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights published in February 2015 and the Government response of March 2015. The Community Right to Challenge was an element of the Localism Act seeking to help communities have more say over the design and running of local services. The government response noted actions they

had and were undertaking, therefore understanding more about what this meant in practice would have provided an additional view to those noted by participants.

As with the main UK government website ([www.national.gov.uk](http://www.national.gov.uk)) and the challenges outlined in Chapter 4, information available on websites was not clear or easily available. This could therefore lead to an FOI request if all other routes were exhausted. The MHCLG responded 9 months later and during this period the author had to rewrite the FOI, as previously told the information was not held. The second FOI was sent twice, due to the first attempt being 'corrupted' by DCLG servers. Partial information was noted as partially held but response delayed due to DCLG consideration of exemptions applying to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In this case it was s36 of the Act, concerning prejudice of effective conduct of public affairs. When the response was received it was noted the information was held and shared with some redactions. The experience showed in a similar way to the participants, that a degree of commitment, knowledge and skills were required in order to navigate and engage with a technical process, even if it was a simple request made of the system. As with participants there were a series of emotions in the experience that arose and self-reflection, which ultimately reinforced the sense that the system was either unable or unwilling to respond appropriately.

The current correspondence is included at Appendix 33 and includes the Select Committee's recommendation, Government response, FOIs and subsequent correspondence. The author has requested an internal review of the FOI as questions remain outstanding and responses unclear.

The supporting information received from the MHCLG noted that the impact of the right to challenge had been lower than expected a year after its introduction. Of approximately 3500 initial enquiries the MHCLG were aware of, only 2 had been accepted. This low take up of the new power linked with complexity of the system and acceptance of the status quo, supported the findings in that existing approaches were being favoured in practice - even if a constant stream of new initiatives were rolled out.

However, the MHCLG response also noted that the impact of the use of the rights had been informally monitored, through light touch reviews, informal meetings and telephone conversations. No survey responses were held, and only a draft example could be provided. The review of the policy noted a formal review would begin in 2015, three years after the introduction, although it was not clear from the FOI response as to whether this was ever completed. Only a roundtable event undertaken by officials was referred to. The response also contained what was described as 'statistical data' by the MHCLG which showed a list of organisations that had successfully bid for services, although caveated with a note that explained this success was not necessarily due to support provided by the programme. Also, a short list of responses from providers noted that many felt there was no change or less openness from councils following the introduction of the right.

Perhaps most tellingly the initial internal review from officials at the DCLG in 2014 noted:

In the main, both the VCS [Voluntary and Community Sector] and LAs [Local Authorities] wish to avoid use of the right [Community Right to Challenge]. For LAs, this is sometimes for ideological reasons, but even broadly supportive authorities have concerns over service fragmentation. The VCS, meanwhile, wishes to avoid damaging relationships (and, by implication the chances of winning future contracts). Many conversations over the feasibility of proposals therefore happen more informally. (2018a)

Therefore, the internal DCLG review outlined how a power or right that had been created and offered to communities yet had not been subject to thorough examination. Further still early on in its existence it was not used to the extent suggested or promoted by the original policy intention, which linked to findings suggesting a disconnect between intention and experienced outcome. On the one hand the Government could respond promptly to a select committee, offering an optimistic and arguably 'ideal' response. However, the information eventually received described a different approach to planned timescales, and a different

sense from a more realistic, arguably 'actual' position. Those from both sides expected as likely to use the right did not wish to, which raised questions previously highlighted by participants over how policies and legislation were developed. These questions considered the extent to which credible engagement had taken place with the very groups it was expected to support and on what basis. Once again, this could reflect the unwillingness of government or the voluntary sector organisations to get more closely involved on a personal or relational level to explore the actual sense of what worked and how. That said, perhaps this was to be expected, given the need to deliver independent, strong, resilient individuals and communities. However such a focus could result in purely functional, institutional responses less driven on caring, kindness, listening or understanding that could reflect a perceived lack of humanity (Carnegie Trust & Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016), and not just in the aftermath of a particular crisis or problem.

The 'new' right to challenge remained in place and has not been amended or withdrawn, although a review in the latest UK Government Green Paper on Integrated Communities noted that there would be revised guidance for communities wishing to take on the running of community assets (2018). This guidance was likely to provide an evaluation the impact of the MHCLG work so far and explain what works and what can be replicated more widely. Whether this would offer a rounded picture of developments during the 6 years since the introduction of the various localism powers or continues with an approach of 'new' initiatives, avoidance of discussion in terms of the reality, mixed with optimism over the future was to be seen.

8.5.1.4 Timeliness and timelines for action: The implications of contradictions  
Again though, this showed the variable and unpredictable lengths of time between state or community awareness of an issue and the choice to act upon it. Perhaps these timescales reflected a reluctance to alter the status quo, although the evidence for continuing with that status was not always apparent. There was no desire therefore to damage a relationship, even if potentially dysfunctional. This could suggest there was some other compelling reason to continue with such patterns of behaviour.

Yet the question of how the policy ideals of localism, decentralisation, devolution or the process of empowerment were to be delivered without a degree of fragmentation or change in control were not explored. Fragmentation in another sense could reflect an increased diversity, something noted by participants as desirable and wider choice, something highlighted within the discourse. However, if the tacit understanding of negative impacts were the common perception, then it would seem unrealistic or even unfair to suggest that empowerment linked to service delivery by smaller organisations as promoted by parliamentary reviews (House of Lords, 2017c) would be achievable. Further still, this message could be confusing for those within communities when the evidence for larger scale provision was mixed. What was crucial however, was that for the public to understand more about the community right to challenge and how a potential individual or group might use it was not easy. To become informed, empowered, and independent, was not as straightforward as the various optimistic analyses presented and brought with it a series of challenges and need for resilience.

#### 8.5.2 Transparency of action

Whilst the original intentions of the big society sought to unleash power nationally through transparency and the use of information, accessing this, whether informally or formally required a degree of resilience or persistence from participants. Individual qualities such as commitment, perseverance and patience were needed to engage in a meaningful way before the likelihood of experiencing the outcomes suggested by texts and literature. This linked to the stages of recovery before 'Action' as explored within section 8.6. There were a variety of points where the system, in terms of its representatives' behaviours or structure meant that individuals could have given up rather than pursued answers. Whilst other research has suggested the main cause for concern had been around behaviour, rather than process (Jennings et al., 2016) the findings in this research have suggested that both are of importance. So, whilst the context was communicated as changing it would appear that much remained the same in terms of the means and methods used to communicate and evaluate community related initiatives. This could also reflect the challenges in accessing, shaping or reviewing

information and could mean the same or limited numbers of 'new' voices or perspectives might actually be involved. Given regular changes in structures and roles, local and national events this could be seen as a mediating strategy to satisfy the various demands. The priority for organisational capacity was focussed on the financial and functional aspects, with less attention given to the relational considerations.

#### 8.5.2.1 Transparency of decision making

Locally, there was a similar position in terms of transparency and the ability to access information. GCC had introduced a new 'Growing our communities fund' to build on the evaluations and stakeholder feedback of the Active Together, Healthy Together and Children's Activity fund. This information was available in the County Council public reports pack (2018a). The reports pack, running at over 360 pages long, contained these discussions and decisions within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). However, the evaluations of schemes or public disseminations were hard for the researcher to find, and it was not clear whether they were publicly available. Therefore, an individual would have had multiple layers to navigate to get to the source of the information. Whilst the new scheme was to be Councillor led, access to information on the grants on the GCC website, meant following a file path linked to the 'Business, property and economy' section. This was not intuitively where individuals or community groups might look for such information.

#### 8.5.2.2 Transparency of service provision, process and structure

Assuming an individual had pursued the development of a relationship, overcome barriers and accessed further information there was still the risk that the terms of engagement with processes could change and the state would still be firmly in control. For example, in the example of the Community Connectors scheme discussed in sections 8.4.2.3 and 8.5.1, following the engagement event and tight timeline, bids were received and presentations made to GCC and GCCG. However, the procurement process was paused early in 2017. At the time it was unclear as to the rationale for this. GCC and GCCG provided a statement which was added to the Pro-Contract website, where the contract tender had originally been placed.

This explained the position from both GCC and GCCG in terms of the change in process:

During the evaluation process it became clear that there was a requirement to materially change elements of the current service specification...We would like to apologise for any inconvenience that cancellation of this procurement may cause your organisation, extend our thanks for the time you have committed to this project to date, and trust that you will express interest in the re-procurement process from mid-March. (Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group & Gloucestershire County Council, 2017)

As also explored at a national level, such approaches could contribute to the problems experienced by those working with communities. In the case of those providing the existing schemes, they had been doing so for many years. The prospect of change would be unsettling. The state had chosen to engage in a specific way, with short notice and timescales to be involved, using a morning event. Prompt action was then expected for the follow up response should an organisation wish to be involved in the procurement. The need to halt the process also happened very quickly, with limited detail provided as to why, in terms of apology or recognition of the impact this might have on an organisation beyond the time committed to date. However, whether such approaches helped to support or undermine the resilience and empowerment of organisations, or reinforce existing perceptions in terms of the problems, power relations were perhaps clearer. This approach could have implications across networks, levels of trust, norms in terms of behaviour and ongoing engagement could therefore influence levels of social capital.

As of Spring 2018, the GCC website contained a statement on the new 'Community Wellbeing Service', the updated name for the 'Community Connectors' scheme noted above. This though could also not be accessed via a recognised file path or section headings, only accessible if using those specific terms. Therefore, unless an

individual was aware it was the new name for the service, you were less likely to find it on the GCC website, even if persistent.

There was a similar position on the Gloucestershire VCS Alliance website, noting the outcomes of an event looking at the strategy for working with Gloucestershire Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector and VCS Alliance. The report by 'One Gloucestershire', in itself perhaps an ambiguous, overly optimistic and simplified description of a set of organisational relationships, referenced an 'Active Communities Board' which would review the outcomes. However, to find any information on this board, its membership or remit was difficult.

#### 8.5.2.3 Transparency of roles

In addition, searching for any community related aspects on the GCC website could provide old and out of date information. For example, searching for Local Engagement Officers (LEO's) on the GCC external website or just 'engagement' did not retrieve results on the role. Instead, historic information that referred to the role of 'Area Lead Officers' (ALOs) and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) were returned. During the period of the studentship and on the council intranet the LEO role was advertised, looking for additional posts to be filled. The expectations of the role were broad, in terms of informing commissioning activity. They included regular attendance at community meetings, sharing information, gathering intelligence and the ability to act on behalf of residents to solve problems. As seen within the Discourse Analysis, the high expectation and optimism was matched with a financial focus and continued control, rather than sharing of power. The Council advert continued on, noting that "...As these positions are subject to business need, the scheme will be regularly reviewed and can be amended, suspended or withdrawn at any time" (Gloucestershire County Council, 2016a).

#### 8.5.3 Implications of timeliness and transparency

Whether these patterns of behaviour were intentional was unclear, however it aligned with participant experiences. Participant descriptions outlined the difficulties in building relationships with key contacts and accessing clear information that could help to develop resilience or empower. 'Stepping forward' was one thing, but what happened next and whether this could be viewed as

'stepping up' could be influenced either way. This arguably reflected the level of attention or prioritisation given, or that the financial and functional considerations could take up most of the capacity of organisations like GCC. It appeared as though there was limited internal capacity, or time to consider more relational elements that might assist communities and bridge the difficulties experienced. However as noted by various inquiries, academic and parliamentary reviews, individual agency, behaviours and cultural factors did matter, and understanding these rather than avoiding them could be beneficial (Chilcot, 2016; House of Lords, 2017c; Lowndes & McCaughie, 2013).

These examples showed how difficult and complex it was at all levels of government to adhere to stated expectations, and that change could take many years to move forward. Yet such expectations continued to be passed onto communities, and from the eyes of participants this suggested a need to live up to or behave in a way that was not reflected in practice. Local prominent events or crises as with the national examples instigated a series of changes and or increased investments in reviews, inquiries or services to address or compensate for failings. However, these often focussed on the functional impacts, rather than the personal consequences.

This coupled with the difficulty in accessing information about a given subject reflected the level of resilience required to cope or become empowered. Individuals and communities found themselves in settings or situations which used language describing a better or ideal approach, a range of opportunities to get involved and unquestioned principles or rationales that ought to be followed. However, when pursued it was discovered in actuality how resilient one needed to be, and how hard it was to become empowered or have a meaningful say. For example, what could be required perhaps was the ability to respond quickly if posed a question but having acceptance of a slow pace in return, if asking one. Participants had to be confident to shift between the informal and formal, do deals, have networks and be of a size and scale, or professional status, perceived as examples of the strong position from which to hold contracts. This created a tacit, yet clear understanding of what was meant by community development and what or who was understood

or desired as resilient. This therefore had implications for who had more likelihood of becoming empowered and breaking into the status quo, of getting recognised even before being heard. This relationship shaped the way in which processes and services were constructed and delivered, with the characteristics sought to be developed within communities.

## 8.6 Considerations for future relationships: Rediscovery through recovery

As explored throughout the thesis, a recurring theme has been the behaviour of the state, and the extent of explanations and justifications for expectations and skills placed on communities to become empowered and resilient. This had led to repeated efforts to present and re-present the case for developing specific skills and attributes. It had enabled the design and redesign of services, to organise and reorganise structures. Often this was been justified in the context of crisis with financial, technical and functional solutions, although challenged within the literature as a one dimensional approach where ignoring relational influences (van Meerkerk & Edelenbos, 2014). The findings of a dominant approach within the discourse reflected this challenge. However, the common approach as analysed through the research, wider reports, evaluations and inquiries had shown failures in this system at a range of different levels (for example the Iraq Enquiry, Grenfell Tower tragedy, Kids Company, Children's Services in Gloucestershire). The position in practice as understood by these viewpoints supported the difference as experienced by those in communities, those on the front line and in receipt of service delivery. Yet, outside of these specific and serious failures or tragic events there appeared to be small windows where the state offered a more reflective, relational or realistic awareness. These for example followed the hung parliament and creation of a coalition government in 2010, with the subsequent launch of the 'Big Society'. Another was the period following the EU referendum vote in 2016, change of Prime Minister and launch of the 'Shared Society'. Whilst this research has highlighted certain skills and capabilities that could be lacking, it was not that the state couldn't reflect in this way. Rather, there were only specific circumstances when it would be more open to do so, before returning to the familiar, repetitive

cycles. In these moments the analysis was still closely guarded, with the past presented simplistically at ends of a spectrum - as negative and inefficient or romanticised. Similarly, the future, usually the main content of the speech was presented as positive and ideal, seeking to address those failings. However, language was also used to raise the risks of division and extreme views. This approach could close off more meaningful and deeper discussion of the consequences, feelings and impacts beyond those outlined by the government. Such sentiments and insights were relatively absent in the periods between.

#### 8.6.1 Recovery and cycles of behaviour

Therefore, the research demonstrated similar patterns, with an appearance of omission or gentle denial through focus on the 'new', or avoidance in a deeper, potentially painful, more personal exploration of the nature of the relationship.

These cycles could be seen to reflect a cultural impact that was not addressed in current ways of working or as experienced by participants. This reflected suggestions that the obsessive focus on structure and economic development could avoid the transformation of culture and therefore increase the perpetuation of negative behavioural norms (Local Government Association, 2017).

The continuing commitment to these patterns could however reflect the need for familiarity, consistency or extent to which organisations had freedom to act. There would be a safety, assurance, more likely to give pleasure in the status quo, rather than discomfort. This had parallels with addictive, compulsive, even compelling patterns of behaviour. These behaviours could be routine, triggered and exaggerated by times of crisis or the need to communicate an essential change or milestone. Actions often had short term effects, for example a sudden change in funding, name change, creation of partnership or re-organisation, creation of pilot or change of process. This could filter through the committee systems or relational networks with varying speeds and levels of visibility.

#### 8.6.2 Recovery and the context for behaviour

Therefore, the context of complexity, change and contradiction could be challenging to adequately describe what was working, in terms of the texts and experience. Hence the broad use of concepts, contributing to a lack of clarity and

transparency of evidence or application of social value. This was a common problem for those involved with creating, implementing, delivering and receiving the intentions or outcomes of policies with regard to developing communities. From a system perspective, the use of empowerment and resilience therefore seemed intuitively obvious ways to answer or describe what worked or needed to work. This often appeared to mean mobilisation of communities and individuals into being more active, connected, strong and self-reliant. During the period of discourse analysis this mobilisation had been linked to a series of rights, powers or changes to legislation. Again, these had been framed in a predominantly functional and financial way.

#### 8.6.3 Recovery and the implication of convergence and divergence

Yet for participants the concepts had a different meaning, articulating aspects of community, empowerment and resilience that were already present and therefore did not need mobilising. Given time to explore life stories and histories, participants understood and had experienced belonging and caring. They could explore the extent to which individuals were perceived as coping and either had (or should) be offered the opportunity to develop and become confident. These outcomes were in places different to the proscribed range of expectations of the state. Some of these differences concerned an ongoing question over whether the state really listened and wished to be inclusive beyond the financial, functional and technical approaches in the discourse. This also reflected that from participant experiences, reviews and inquiries during the period, the evidence for state assumptions and optimistic outcomes were not necessarily realised in practice. Therefore, the extent to which initiatives or reorganisations were trusted or taken seriously varied.

The language of crisis was regularly employed, which as previously explored in Chapter 6 had a series of meanings and interpretations. In terms of developing communities therefore policies referred to a state of crisis and used terms such as empowerment and resilience as solutions at an individual or community level. Yet as also noted this was a complex area, with these concepts already regarded within the academic literature as part of the wider process of recovery, not necessarily as stand-alone solutions that could be procured, increased and replicated at scale.

As explored in the literature review, recovery in terms of definition had been argued as contested (O'Donnell & Shaw, 2016) or even harder to articulate (Stickley & Wright, 2011a), however some of the disconnects and challenges, or even lack of change as understood from the research findings could potentially be better explored in terms of using the concept of recovery first, before assumptions over the use of subsidiary concepts such as empowerment and resilience.

Recovery as a concept had faced similar criticisms to empowerment and resilience as a means through which to justify reduction in services through increased independence and a return to normality (Slade et al., 2014). In practice, through organisations such as Implementing Recovery through Organisational Change (ImROC) have sought to embed recovery principles in their work with service users, workers and communities. Recovery therefore offered a different lens through which to view individuals and communities, attitudes and values that involved a relational, respectful and realistic approach to personal and wider societal change. Recovery, given its focus on the importance of individual experience, had links with the foundations of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, in sharing an idiographic focus. However this could also create shared challenges in gaining acceptance as being rooted lower in established hierarchies of evidence (Leamy et al., 2011).

Within the recovery literature the 'CHIME' framework 'Connectedness, Hope and optimism about the future, Identity and Meaning in life and Empowerment' (Leamy et al., 2011) has had an increasing prominence, with 'Difficulties' suggested as a further addition to reflect the experience from a service user perspective, to create CHIME-D (Stuart et al., 2017). Therefore, the CHIME framework had a series of parallels with the findings from the texts and participant interviews.

'Connectedness' linked to relationships, 'Hope' linked to motivation to change, 'Meaning in life' linked to quality of life and social goals and 'Empowerment' linked to responsibility and a focus upon strengths. Within the research findings the larger divergence was apparent within the theme of 'Identity'. The CHIME framework explored identity, summarising it as the dimensions of identity, rebuilding the positive sense and overcoming stigma (Leamy et al., 2011). These aspects were

highlighted across both approaches in the research, with the focus for the texts being more aligned with the positive sense.

#### 8.6.4 Recovery and the potential for future application

Using recovery, as a flexible process to signal changes required in attitudes and values (Bonney & Stickley, 2008) offered opportunities as a lens through which to view the findings. These could consider the way in which a fuller understanding of empowerment and resilience in the context of recovery could perhaps review the cycles of behaviour and existing approaches in a different light. This would draw on the convergence and divergence in emphases from within the discourse and the participant interviews. Such an analysis for example could offer explanations of findings from both approaches which described how high expectations could still lead to unrealistic or unrealised outcomes. Tables 9 and 10 illustrate how the cycles and approaches, the differences in emphasis between discourse and experience could be seen through a recovery model:

**Table 9: Stages of recovery**

1	Precontemplation	Crisis (Recuperation), Dependence: Unaware, Stuck, Overwhelmed by the disability	
2	Contemplation	Dependent: Aware, Accepting help, Spark of hope, Struggling with disability	
3	Preparation	Decision (rebuilding independence), Developing Insight, Establishing Independence	
4	Action	Awakening (building healthy interdependence), Independent: Aware, Discovering keys to well-being, Active engagement with meaningful occupations, Living with disability	
5	Maintenance and growth	Improved quality of life, Interdependent: Aware, Growth, Efforts towards community integration, Living beyond disability	

Adapted from: (Leamy et al., 2011)

KEY: Recovery stages emphases within the discourse and participant interviews

Discourse	
Participant Interviews	
Both	

The classifications within the tables reflected the described emphasis and recognised that each approach could potentially exhibit all aspects at a given time,

however the classification sought to highlight patterns. For example, much of the discourse concerned itself with the recovery stages from preparation to maintenance and growth. This would reflect the functional and financial aspects, as opposed to the more personal and practical aspects in the pre-contemplation and contemplation stages. Increased attention might be required for these stages, before considering those of action and growth and vice-versa in terms of the emphasis within participant interviews. Table 10 illustrates how there are key aspects from the participant interviews which were relatively absent from the discourse. The overwhelmingly optimistic and wide-ranging outcomes expressed for communities meant that certain aspects were not given deeper consideration. Pre-contemplating or contemplating before preparing to act on the divergence also offered ways in which the three main discourses could be balanced in the light of recovery. For example, that there might not be a cure or things might not be or return to normal could temper the expectation that these issues were something that could be acquired, commodified or replicated in every instance. That the recovery process was a struggle might offer a broader sense of what was common sense and common good when discussing community, empowerment and resilience. That the process was not linear, and subject to trial and error offered perhaps a more realistic way of addressing the tendency to continually re-present issues as 'new' or transformed.

**Table 10: Characteristics of the recovery journey**

1	Recovery is an active process	Yellow
2	Individual and unique process	Yellow
3	Non-linear process	Blue
4	Recovery as a journey	Yellow
5	Recovery as stages or phases	Yellow
6	Recovery as a struggle	Blue
7	Multidimensional process	Yellow
8	Recovery is a gradual process	Yellow
9	Recovery as a life-changing experience	Yellow
10	Recovery without cure	Blue
11	Recovery is aided by supportive and healing environment	Yellow
12	Recovery can occur without professional intervention	Yellow
13	Trial and error process	Blue

Adapted from: (Leamy et al., 2011)

KEY: Recovery characteristics emphases within the discourse and participant interviews

Discourse	Green
Participant Interviews	Blue
Both	Yellow

## 8.7 Reflections on the discussion

The approaches have highlighted that the concepts as desired by the state, were not necessarily as described by participant experience. Therefore, this raised questions over whether the concepts had meaning as commodity or community based, relational or functional. These findings had wider implications for the nature of the relationship with communities, whether the shared hopes had common aims.

As noted earlier in this chapter, one of the key discussion points was for those working in roles with the communities seeking to contemplate or reflect upon how things worked, before short cutting to 'what' worked and taking action. This knowledge whilst tacit and something could not always be shared was very important. To be in denial of its operation was in part to ignore the disconnect and consequences between what was said and done. These could cause emotional tensions arising from descriptions of self-identity. This also had implications for what was evaluated and the methods we choose to use. In a similar way it supported previous conclusions that more work was still to be done in accepting the strengths and limitations in the relationship between policy and science. Such relationships have been argued as needing time to mature, to become more understanding and informed (Greenhalgh & Malterud, 2017).

As also noted within the thesis, there were communities not just community; that is communities within a community. One such (and influential) community was that of those who made policy and decisions, for example "...the opinion forming subcultures" (Jones et al., 2013, p. 37) which could shape the direction and cultural aspects of an organisational approach. Yet the question remained, as to whether communities and their representatives were truly wanted or could belong within that community of decision makers. This examined the possibility or potential as

communicated by GCC for Community Connectors, to procure services through making shared decision, letting local people decide outcomes that represented the whole of communities, even those seldom heard. An alternative explanation could suggest that relationships were subject to business need, as in the case of GCC internal communications about their own LEOs. Whilst the discourse suggested much was possible, the academic literature and participant experiences offered caution, not least that meaningful change as described to communities could be achieved. For example, as in the case of the Community Connectors procurement, using short timescales, such as a morning event and four-month process covering the Christmas period to re-procure a key community facing service.

To this end it could be seen that given its functional, financial and technical approach the state was at best only willing and able to regulate its own level or definition of empowerment and resilience, given the complex, contradictory and changing context in which it operated. Therefore, in return, communities and their development were in part limited through the need to cope with the way the state continued to behave. These behaviours in and of themselves were not inherently wrong, being complex and multi-faceted. But as will be noted in the recommendations chapter, this highlighted a series of internal considerations, choices and consequences that could arise from engaging with communities. That the position could appear as chaotic, might not be that surprising if the state struggled to be unified. The findings reflected research that suggested the state was a community of sorts, with its own tendencies and counter-tendencies pulling in a variety of directions (Hay, 2014b).

## 8.8. Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the complexity of meanings for community, empowerment and resilience. Analysing and critically evaluating the conceptual complexities and their role in the development of communities in Gloucestershire during a period of austerity, were key aims of the research. These meanings were set in a context of change and could generate actions and feelings that could appear contradictory. This highlighted the key findings arising from the research in terms of areas of convergence and divergence across the four themes of problems,

power identity and relationships. Despite a fluid and complex relationship between the themes, participants working at a distance from, or close to the system could have similar motivations, understandings and feelings. Whilst some of this similarity was due to the broad, vague or simplistic usage of concepts in the discourse, they were not necessarily interpreted or prioritised in the same way. This could create expectations leading to misunderstandings and disconnection. For many participants being empowered and resilient was as much about confidence and courage in dealing with the system as much as the events in their own lives. Being empowered was desired if not necessarily attainable in the way described by the state. It was not clear whether the system would be able to cope with empowered, resilient communities outside of a prescribed and proscribed set of controlled conditions and expected outcomes.

Therefore, the use of Discourse Analysis and IPA generated new insights into the participant understanding of these concepts. The combined approach supported the second aim of the research, which sought to explore the processes of resilience and empowerment, highlighting the disconnect between the optimistic and predominantly functional approach within the discourse. The high level of optimism did not always sit easily with the perhaps arguably lower and more realistic, relational expectations of participant experiences. Whilst there were many things that could be achieved if more empowered and resilient, being resilient, or being able to cope was more prominent. In some respects it could be argued that there was an interpretation or reality from the state that was impaired arising from the tension. This had linkages with descriptions of psychosis following past negative experiences (Stuart et al., 2017). Being empowered was about having the confidence, not just in terms of control to do the things the state was asking, but more broadly in terms of quality of life, options and access to experiences.

Given the context, it was not surprising that a predominance for over optimism resulted in a simplification of ideas, justified with financial, functional and technical approaches. This appeared as a means for the state to use its own perceived strengths to be resilient and empowered, given the challenges it faced and expectations of a deeper relationship with communities. Having to deliver all

aspects at speed, either by choice or due to pressures elsewhere, for example as part of the political environment, local collaboration or national direction had impacts for those working in and outside of the system. Whilst having an apparent sense of chaos or crisis, this sense of change, was a familiar practice created a degree of comfort or security. These recurring patterns of behaviour deferred or denied the need to embrace or explore reality as experienced by those in communities, unless in times of crisis.

The problem with this complex system, however, was that it could become hard to define what was required or even to evaluate what was already in place. Even if this was possible, it was very difficult to analyse when the concepts were so broad yet already assumed as understood. Each step of the policy development had a degree of mediation, negotiation and interpretation making it increasingly complicated to consider options or seek agreement. The system itself was regularly creating new partnerships, initiatives and priorities which created a further sense of constant transition and gains. However, these gains could be viewed as losses from participants.

Should members of communities wish to understand this further or penetrate the workings of the system this was a challenge. Using the complaints process, or the Freedom of Information Act, as found by the author could be enacted as a last resort was also challenging. This could follow a perceived sense of the state being unable or unwilling to listen or provide clear and transparent information. However, this then meant a long and complicated process, often to achieve an unsatisfactory outcome.

In the analysis and exploration of both sets of findings therefore, there were recurring patterns, in terms of similar messages sought to be communicated by government and the system, and in terms of experience. Both had a familiarity, sense of history or continuity that could be drawn upon to provide the basis of future action. This action was often more optimistic or grand in terms of descriptions in the discourse, yet more ordinary or something to help in coping in terms of participant experience. Alongside this, recurring patterns of behaviour were seen in the way in which the relationship between the state and communities

was worked out in practice. This could reflect key events that might have caused changes in direction or priority, such as the global financial crisis, the Grenfell Tower tragedy or critical Ofsted report. Day to day, the way in which engagement and involvement was undertaken and initiatives evaluated suggested a continuing use of similar approaches, even in the absence of evidence to do so. As seen with the ongoing dilemmas over the outcomes for Brexit and the recent review of Universal Credit, such approaches often offered no palatable alternatives and could increase costs for local administrations. These left sections of communities reporting they were not being listened to, consulted or a sense that the state was unsympathetic, similar to findings from the research and the wider Community Development literature. The complexity of such initiatives, linked to multi-faceted issues, such as employment and wellbeing meant that there was uncertainty if it would ever be possible to evaluate the intended impact. This in a similar way reflected other analyses of increasing capacity or 'stepping up' to improve resilience and empowerment within communities, for example in the case of getting large numbers of people into work (National Audit Office, 2018).

Therefore, it appeared there were cycles in terms of the wider discourse, where important moments would create the need for a shift or break from previous ways of doing things. This would be also communicated simply. However, once the policy or message was delivered this would be followed by a far more complicated picture of how a given message was then commissioned and delivered. This was often reflected in various 'new' plans and reorganisations of groups. The delivery sought to draw on the concepts as acquired resources forming part of a linear series of steps within the familiar context, that of the commissioning or electoral cycles. These cycles had a series of formal and informal rules and regulations that needed to be understood and navigated.

For the participant interviews there was a different path in terms of understanding and meaning. However, this also shared a sense of simplicity followed by complexity. The essence of the concepts was simple, in terms of belonging, confidence and coping. Familiarity was found in the day to day, the places and connections between people. These elements were worked out and lived in the

context of vital local places and space, having links with the notion of persistent resilience (Andres & Round, 2015). Identity and its relationship to recovery was more complex.

That the national or local state was perceived therefore to be behaving in a particular, functional way, seeking to regulate or in some way offer a paternalistic approach was in itself was not unexpected. However, the extent of withdrawal of the state (Emejulu, 2015) linked to an ever increasing level of optimism, and unsubstantiated outcomes suggested increasing tensions between the actual, ought and ideal identities in operation.

Furthermore, the continuing cycle and return to similar, re-presented positions should offer both challenge and optimism for those within the field of community development and for the use of recovery as a means to explore future actions. Both recognised the importance of resilience and empowerment, but that a return to the status quo or to 'normal' may not be a realistic goal, linear and subject to trial and error. Abstaining from such approaches and considering steps for recovery and rehabilitation will be considered in the conclusion and recommendations chapter.

## Chapter 9 - Conclusion

### 9.1 Introduction

The research studentship afforded time to explore an incredibly complex and rich phenomenon. The position of this chapter in the context of the thesis is illustrated at Appendix 34. The aims of the research, explored through the analysis of texts and participant interviews highlighted an optimistic and hopeful collective story around community, empowerment and resilience. In some senses the concepts were symbolic and common sense in their usage and meaning, as they were used to provide an element of comfort, assurance or security just by the act of talking or writing about them. Even if it was not entirely clear what the specific underlying definitions were, the evidence basis, or intent in application - using them appeared to be the right thing to do.

Understanding the role and impact of language was a key question, and it was found to be central in shaping a collective story which put simply often assumed that more could be achieved with less. The approach to remind people of their independence, choice and self-sufficiency was argued to have many benefits. Making the case for increased individual control, freedom and sense of purpose were all reflected as important within the literature, either from a neo-liberal perspective or to offer alternative options and social justice.

However, this approach brought implications in the present for dominant understandings of the past, i.e. that there had been previous inefficiencies, and that the future required demonstrable changes. There was an achievable and accessible increase, or additional capacity argued as possible in terms of outcomes. Yet, whilst quantifiable reductions in expenditure and service redesign could be noted in terms of successes, the shifts of power argued by politicians and policy makers as important in times of crisis and change, did not necessarily materialise in practise. This position had been argued as requiring re-evaluation if decentralising power was a genuine intention (Institute for Government, 2014).

Reviews and inquiries continued to showed challenges across key areas of service delivery relevant to Local Government, such as Children's Services, Employment,

Housing and Immigration, be that at a local or national level. These highlighted how the system appeared increasingly complicated, contradictory and changing, even if it was using less resources more efficiently.

However, many of these concerns and tensions facing communities and the state were not new. Issues of power, education and community organisation had been previously applied to the nature of society and its future direction, on an individual or collective basis. The role of voluntary action, provision for the frail and medical care had been seen before: through the creation of the welfare state in the UK, the British Community Development Projects (CDPs), and within recent initiatives such as the 'Big' or 'Shared' Societies. Writers such as Freire, Alinsky and Putnam had similarly reflected on changes in, or achievable by, communities over previous decades. Their ideas around education, organisation and social capital had influenced or been appropriated to some degree by all groups. For both the communities and the state therefore, finding an identity, a voice, a message, a relationship was important but often vital for very different ends.

More recently in terms of community development, Emejulu (2015), had noted the 'Transformation' discourse as a key element of a process to build a radical form of citizenship and solidarity. However as seen within the research findings 'Transformation' had already become firmly established within the language of the state, forming part of a discourse with quite different intentions. Calls to action by the state, often resulted in contemplation from participants rather than, maintenance and growth - to use the recovery model stages as a description.

Tensions between change and the status quo resulted in continuing, repetitive behaviours and actions. These influenced the processes involved in developing resilient and empowered communities, and the attributes of those engaged in such activity. This included the approaches towards evidence selection, prioritisation and transparency. This also affected the means and location of involvement or engagement with communities. Difficulties could arise therefore, when seeking to explore the basis on which decisions were made, in order to understand or interpret the resulting communications. For those in communities there was also a degree of acceptance and acquiescence in not wishing to damage existing

relationships. Yet for some, this led to a deeper questioning of the relationship itself. For them this was not about working below the radar or controlling its operation, but more that the radar itself was a potential irrelevance.

These tensions were often tacitly understood and unspoken, framing the nature of relationship, terms of engagement, creating different responses for those working in and out of the state. Within the discourse, the state communicated this as part of a process to solve problems and define in an ideal sense 'what worked'. For participants it often generated self-reflections over their own personal credibility, exploring 'how' things ought to work in practise. For both groups, their perceptions of each other suggested a degree of realism and pragmatism as suggested by Saul Alinsky, in that one could "...miss the target by shooting too high as well as too low" (2010, p. xviii).

The research also aimed to understand the meanings of the concepts, and this showed how these understandings diverged and converged at different points, generating common themes of Problems, Power, Identity and Relationship. These themes were situated in the complex, changing and often contradictory environment. The themes were primarily shaped and triggered by differences in understating and interpretation: be that from a financial, functional and technical viewpoint within the discourse or a personal, practical and relational viewpoint arising from the interviews. This created challenges for how community, empowerment and resilience were understood, the extent that this was shared and therefore the outcomes that would come from seeking to 'develop' them.

## 9.2 Originality of the research design

There was a large amount of activity, volunteering and caring underway in Gloucestershire, as well as a large array of indicators which sought to illustrate perspectives on the strength of communities. As such, there was potential in using different approaches to explore 'what worked' in a way complementary to existing datasets available to GCC. The studentship provided an opportunity to consider whether this was the best way to manage such a process, within an environment subject to restructuring, reorganisation and change. Many staff within departments

and priorities could come and go. Similarly, as a researcher there were specific phases of the studentship and the need to straddle different worlds, of the academic, organisational and participants - and at different stages. Furthermore, Community Development crossed boundaries as a concept and academic discipline in theory, in a similar way to the 'Boundary Spanners' work in practice.

Given the complexity and broad scope of the subject matter, selecting an approach that could offer insight from policy and personal experience, from what was said and subsequently done was valuable. There were cultural aspects of performance, exploring 'how' something came to be through the discourse, or the meaning of what happened using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. This proved instructive, as meaning making was part of, but more than the discourse alone (Eatough & Smith, 2006).

Selecting multiple approaches and integrating the discussion, had parallels with rationales for links between partnerships and evidencing improved outcomes. Whilst partnerships and collaborations - as with the concept of community - intuitively suggested there were things that couldn't be done alone and better achieved with a combination of resources or perspectives, there had been difficulties in understanding the nature of collaborative advantage (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2015). Research had suggested reasons beyond rational explanations, in terms of cultural aspects and the role of discourse as to why actors continued to participate in the absence of evidence to do so (Dickinson & Sullivan, 2014). This contributed to the rationale for selection of the approaches and eventual findings.

However, whilst there were a range of potential contradictions, disconnects and divergence in the findings given the complex design, these findings could be used by GCC to demonstrate engagement and involvement in the lives of communities in the longer term. The research also enabled engagement with the various actors to support the research aim in a novel way and offered consideration of the various theoretical perspectives outlined within this thesis. Adopting a purposefully inclusive and empowering design, to understand complexity and the characteristics of successful social action (Phillimore, 2015), provided a means of investigating

what facilitated and constrained the development of resilient and empowered communities.

#### 9.2.1 Limitations of the research

The scope of study was incredibly broad. This was in part due to the original scope which reflected some of the common-sense assumptions about community, empowerment and resilience. Given that they were so easily and frequently used, they could also be assumed as easily understood and therefore easily researched into and ultimately acted upon. This was further assured by the confidence in knowledge and use of evidence, that there were answers to questions which we could know 'worked' with certainty.

Exploring the design had challenges in that certain organisations appeared to be very adept and skilled at asking questions of others, yet less able or receptive when questions were asked of them. The length of time given to defining the questions from an academic perspective did not necessarily sit well with the needs for immediate answers from an organisational perspective and could shape the nature of relationships within the sponsoring organisation. This could result in a pressure to select approaches that used the common language and methods which met the pressing need or was at least consistent with national and local policy agendas. In this case the sponsoring organisations were flexible and willing to explore other options.

Therefore, whilst there was much to be gained from the use of an original approach, it could also be misunderstood and harder therefore to gain acceptance and engagement as a researcher. In addition, exploring individual accounts in such depth could create the risk of situations being described as more pronounced than they actually were (Nakamura, 2013). With such a focus on the 'new' and pressures on time, much effort was also required to convince participants of what could be gained from in depth interviews exploring the meaning of their past experiences, or from policy documents that already existed but might not be visible to them. This also reflected the extent to which such experiences could offer opportunities for the future by learning from the present (Smith et al., 2009).

In some ways by even framing the studentship around the development of active and empowered communities brought with it an immediate suggestion or assumption that communities were not in the position they could or should be. As a perceived representative of the Council and University this added the sense from certain participants that perhaps the solutions had already been defined. This perception was apparent, even if the author explained how the research sought to answer questions or respond to articulated problems.

Further still, where reports or policies offered some hope of an understanding of community experience, these often appeared to fall short in practice. Introducing the context as time sensitive and critical, in an overly idealistic fashion, with expectations for one size to fit all in a linear, stable manner could be unhelpful. This created undue tension and pressure, less likely to achieve results (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce, 2015), but this could also push participants away from engagement, reinforcing the perceived (limited) benefits of getting involved. There were concerns reflecting wider perceptions over the lack of use of qualitative evidence from the VCSE sector or consideration of social value (Department of Health et al., 2016; Social Enterprise UK, 2016), as continuing uses of particular indicators, models or sources of evidence to describe communities remained. Multiple reviews or policy developments with a lack of serious engagement, implementation or transparency had not helped (Casey, 2016; Sense about Science, 2016), yet further reviews or inquiries were planned with little awareness or reference to outcomes from previous experience.

### 9.3 Key findings, contribution to knowledge and conclusions

The challenges appeared to be managed and mitigated by recurring patterns of behaviour. This continued even though previous reviews had suggested awareness could be raised by focussing on what communities wanted to achieve, rather than a pre-defined route (House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, 2015), in the case of community rights for example.

#### 9.3.1 Recurring patterns of behaviour

Therefore, the collective story being communicated and likely responses and actions from participants repeated themselves. This situation was illustrated by

degrees of coping, requiring confidence and judgements over credibility in order to maintain a status quo. This cycle had many parallels with themes arising from the mental health literature, not least as the key concepts were regularly used in the context of wider wellbeing. 'Crisis' was regularly employed with the discourse, yet notably avoiding a deeper discussion of, or transparency over, the how and why this had arisen. More attention therefore was given to what needed to be achieved going forward. This generated calls to action, highlighting power relations or parity of esteem between the state and communities. Such parity also reflected similar approaches to understanding between mental and physical health. High and idealist expectations, yet often lower actual outcomes in practise, helped to explain swings and shifts in behaviours actions and the speed with which they could take place. However, the research also reflected a wider context where high expectations did not just arise from the discourse. Social media and online platforms offered the benefits of instant communications and reactions.

Whilst much of the discourse was underpinned by repeated themes of ownership and consumption, of being in control, much of what appeared to matter to participants suggested a repeated activity of a different kind. This repetition included the time to build relationships, awareness and confidence of people around a particular place, issue or personal characteristic. As a result, trying to be all things, to all people, at all times was unsustainable either as a policy or personal aim.

This suggested specific and differing priorities, which reflected considerations for both policy makers and academics alike. For example, the focus on relevance in terms of policy creation, appeared to be the case within the discourse. However, this was to the detriment of credibility and legitimacy, suggested as problematic in informing decisions (G. Dunn & Laing, 2017). Decisions or actions therefore could be quick or slow depending on the circumstances. In some senses the state was behaving in a similar way to the various 'vulnerable' groups it was charged with supporting, where it was paternalistically argued that organisations such as councils should step in (Dolan, Hallsworth, Halpern, King, & Vlaev, 2014). The obsessive and often chaotic approaches to methods of evaluation, actions and communications

suggested a continuing cycle needing to be recovered. For example, the need for longer term planning was recognised in health and social care (House of Lords, 2017a; NHS England, 2014) yet “... The scale of what we [the NHS] need to do in future depends on how well we end the current year” (NHS England, 2015, p. 3).

Therefore, the findings arising from both approaches in terms of needing to rethink, let go, listen, recognise limitations or acknowledge the inconsistent progress of past approaches, also pointed towards the concept of recovery.

### 9.3.2 The use of recovery

Recovery, a flexible process to signal changes required in attitudes and values (Bonney & Stickley, 2008) offered a future means of drawing together the wide range of intentions for the use of empowerment and resilience, both in terms of community development and the challenges faced by the state. The ‘CHIME’ Framework showed how there were overlaps with the research in terms of the prominence of Connectedness and Hope, but also how Identity and Meaning were important, an area where the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis helped to uncover differences in understanding. It also helped offer explanations for some of the areas of divergence and disconnect arising from the analysis of texts and participant experience. This provided opportunities for understanding and learning, that could be realistic for those generating and on the delivery end of initiatives. This suggested more attention could be given to the stages of recovery within the discourse, in terms of precontemplation and contemplation before taking decisions to act. The characteristics of the recovery journey offered much cause for hope given the range of aspects that were shared between the discourse and participant interviews.

Having hope or high expectations was not completely unhelpful, as having optimism, faith or objectives to fulfil in the midst of crisis could assist in suggesting future alternatives and directions. However, intentions and outcomes were more complex than their descriptions with the discourse might have suggested or presumed. Similarly, reflections on the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the Community Development Journal highlighted the process of wrestling with and returning to issues rather than

the expectation of simply overcoming them. This in turn had parallels with the ideas of recovery as non-linear and of struggle.

However, the consideration that there may not be a 'cure' or solution, the trial and error, non-linear aspects of recovery were relatively absent from the discourse, although recognised in practice from participants. Considering why this was absent from the discourse or what it would mean to incorporate such messaging would require aspects of the recovery model in terms of contemplation. Recovery also offered areas of convergence with aspects of the wider state discourse in that it could promote a degree of independence and self-direction to understand one's situation (Nakamura, 2013).

One of the key aspects as highlighted from the research was the need to re-present issues as new, to move on and transform. This appeared to run alongside an often-unspoken concern as articulated within the DCLG FOI response explored in Chapter 8, that change could lead to fragmentation which had many negative connotations. However, the regular re-organisation, changes in descriptions and functions also created complexity and contradiction. This, in some respects further fragmented the already complicated understandings of community, empowerment and resilience. These changes could often be sudden or unexpected, in terms of speed or an individual becoming aware, dependent on their access to information, networks or transparency from the sender. As other studies have shown, for example in the case of foster placement breakdown (Rostill-Brookes et al., 2011) such change can disempower and inhibit individuals' ability to cope with transitions, which as shown in the discourse can be frequent outcomes. This could place similar burdens on those workers seeking to assist. In some senses foster caring offered an interesting analogy for the role of the state and community development but similar cautions in terms of the consequences of its actions.

### 9.3.3 Problems, power, identity and relationships

The research confirmed that the key concepts had an enduring appeal and power, which supported their continued and increasing application. Their ambiguity could generate a wide range of meanings that provided a simple means to suggest legitimacy and credibility. They were used predominantly within the discourse in a

functional way, being resources that could be commodified and deployed. The concepts continued to be used in a technical and financial sense often privileging the 'professional' or commissioner understanding. This was not necessarily the authentic language of those working in communities and therefore elements could be lost in translation. This was enhanced not least due to the various mediating efforts of individuals working in Gloucestershire with a stake in the development of communities. Coleman (as cited in Lowndes & McCaughie, 2013, p. 544) suggested there was a need to "...reconcile old assumptions and identities with new realities" in terms of coping with the changes experienced in local government resulting from austerity and cuts. However, the research highlighted the importance of offering clarity over what might be described as old or new, alongside the recognition of complexity relatively absent from discussions of identity.

Participants operated across boundaries, a key aspect which became apparent during the development of the project; these 'Boundary Spanners', as Williams (2010) described them, were recognised within the literature but had a lack of role definition. Other definitions had included 'Inside activists' (Olsson & Hysing, 2012) or 'Street-level bureaucrats' (Lipsky, 2010). In observing a variety of individuals in communities and within GCC, these definitions did not necessarily fit well with day to day experience. Either the categorisation felt too formal or rather abstract, not recognising the complex, multi role, setting and fluid nature of such activities. For some, particularly those living in the communities they represented, their activities were just what was needed to be done rather than described.

However, regardless of the Boundary Spanner definition, their presence influenced change and impacted upon communities offering a lifeline for residents, a consistent face or a means for the state to engage with those 'on the ground'. Understanding theories underpinning power relations, participants' motivations, life histories, and the complexity in interpersonal or organisational links was of importance for community development (Gilchrist, 2009, 2016). Therefore, individual experiences were considered alongside the textual analysis of wider discourse, to understand what had been 'said' and how things were perceived to be 'done' or lived within communities. Whilst much good was underway and themes

were shared, there were disconnects and divergences in how they were described and conceptually understood.

#### 9.3.4 Contribution to knowledge

The key aspect of this research and an original contribution to knowledge has been the application of a novel and innovative approach in this area (Phillips, 1993, as cited in Phillips & Pugh, 2010). The research explored how the focus on 'what works' had not been matched with a similar interest in 'how it works'. This approach combined both Discourse Analysis and IPA, which to date had not been used within the field of Community Development. Using this unique approach provided a new perspective on the issues under investigation and identified findings not previously identified before in this depth, within the literature. This offered an opportunity to ask different questions of actors in terms of how collaboration across communities took place and that which might compel them to continue doing so (Dickinson & Sullivan, 2014).

The key findings outlined the convergence and divergence in meaning, which contributed to existing understandings of community, empowerment and resilience. The convergence and divergence identified within the thesis recognised and supported previous research into empowerment and resilience which noted such interactions offered a "...wealth of potential for scholarship and intervention to help marginalized and underserved people and communities..." (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 344).

These contributions, which have emerged from applying the unique combination of Discourse Analysis and IPA have therefore provided the current body of knowledge in this area with a new perspective. This has supported many existing areas of enquiry across the literature, an outcome which has also been argued to offer an original contribution (Phillips, 1993, as cited in Phillips & Pugh, 2010). This highlighted the enduring relevance of Community Development and wealth of information already available. Pausing to contemplate, to look back at the past could also help in recognising the "...positive, but sometimes problematic legacy of [Community] projects" (Banks & Carpenter, 2017, p. 266).

As a consequence of looking at this issue with a different approach, these findings offered implications for future community development research and issues of problems, power, identity and relationships - the four themes arising from the analysis. The following summary emphasises the unique contribution this study provided to the body of knowledge to date:

1. This thesis considered an addictive or compulsive cycle between actors and organisations both in and out of the state. Their recurring challenges and solutions predated more recent concerns which have explored neoliberal agendas, economic analyses and the potential of community development to bring change (Carpenter et al., 2016). The cycle as uncovered often appeared as a dysfunctional union of primarily financial, functional and technical descriptions, actions and expectations and those of a personal, practical and relational nature. The research highlighted how this could trigger behaviours and outcomes actors sought to mitigate against, having consequences (unintended or otherwise) for the nature of the relationship. This offered new insights into existing discussions regarding the expectations of individuals during times of challenge, descriptions of challenges and how such challenges were formed (O'Donnell & Shaw, 2016). This provided future possibilities to explore these addictive and compulsive patterns in terms of the psychological consequences, alongside the economic impacts
2. The sense of recurring patterns of behaviour and status quo in the relationship offered challenges to those working more closely with the state. Previous research had explored the community development discourse, which has noted how the 'Transformation' discourses of the 1980s and 90s sought equality, democratisation of public spaces and a discussion of the common good. This it was argued could support the most marginalised and stimulate action (Emejulu, 2015). Emejulu highlighted how it was not just the changes arising from austerity that were of significance, but the extent to which such changes (i.e. state withdrawals) were taking place. This research identifies that following the turn of the century, in the texts analysed, 'Transformation' as a discourse, and understandings of the common good had been appropriated and assimilated by the state. In addition, the extent of this advancement had been matched by a withdrawal of alternative discourses of reform and justice, except in times of specific crisis or tragedy. Questions of retrenchment therefore remain valid challenges for both sides, not just the state

3. Given the complexity, particularly in terms of self-identity, the research suggests a need for a rediscovery of relationships through recovery. Recovery is a concept which although contested, encompasses both empowerment and resilience as a framework. Empowerment and resilience were described by participants as ways and means to develop confidence and cope with the 'state of the relationship', and the 'relationship with the state'. This research has recognised the need for increased focus in the efficacy of considering the recovery stages of pre-contemplation and contemplation before taking action. Addressing these areas through further study could provide the basis for a different, therapeutic relationship for personal and community development, by uncovering the "...perceptions, realities and social dynamics that influence well-being" (Rodrigues, 2017, p. 374)

#### 9.4 Final remarks

This chapter has summarised the conclusions arising from the analysis and discussion of community, empowerment and resilience. Increased understanding through the analysis and critical evaluation of these concepts and their role in the development of communities in Gloucestershire during a period of austerity, were key aims of the research. Much of the research had explored the differences between what was practiced and preached. These differences were illuminated through the use of Discourse Analysis and IPA, supporting the second aim, which sought to explore the processes of resilience and empowerment. Whilst simplification of the issues and challenges had many benefits in managing complexity, the eventual outcomes often crystallised in a negative way over a series of years, even generations.

As has been seen with the UK exit from the European Union, longstanding concerns can lead to decisions based on inconclusive evidence, simplistic questions and short timescales for action. Such outcomes could have long term impacts, financial costs and challenge the efficacy of continuation with such approaches.

Many of the participants questioned the shifts towards cuts and service reduction, although the research has also highlighted how it was not just about cuts in services - although these were perceived to be present. Instead the approaches highlighted short-cuts in the proper consideration of community identities and how they might have related to the state in its various guises. For example, much investment across

the system had considered behavioural change, promoted under the acronym of 'EAST' (Realising the Value Consortium, 2016b). This argued for approaches to be Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely. Whether the state was able to operate in such a way itself, beyond being timely, given its need and focus on continued policy relevance was questionable. Whether 'nudges' were more urgently required within the community of policy development, rather than out in communities was also important to consider.

The research therefore offered a series of challenges. Firstly, to the researcher in terms of examining their own assumptions regarding the research design and approach towards collecting information. Secondly, for the reforming voices to speak up in the midst of such a crowded field of debate and thirdly for the state to consider in more detail the links between policy intention and outcomes. Using recovery as a realistic framework to help explore changes in the relationship, offered potential for a "...reflexive solidarity" (McCrea et al., 2017, p. 400), where those working in and outside of the state might recognise their contributions to both the problems and solutions.

For all groups there were the dilemmas arising from what was actually done, what should be done or could ideally done. Hope for the future was present on all sides to not give up from either perspective, even if the present was subject to an addictive yet compelling cycle. Recovery again offered an opportunity perhaps to realistically re-imagine a breakthrough in the relationship, with breakthroughs often coming in unexpected ways and from small beginnings. Having a sense of pragmatism and realism was not just about a series of rules for radicals (Alinsky, 2010), but also resonated with previous reflections from Williams (as cited in Mayo et al., 2008). This suggested that in the midst of such dilemmas, an appropriate response would be to act for the best if nothing else. This of course as with so much discovered within the research would be far easier to state in theory, than deliver in practice. In the midst of this position, the final chapter offers a series of recommendations and reflections, in terms of policy, practice and future research.

## Chapter 10 - Recommendations

### 10.1 Introduction

This chapter lists the series of recommendations arising from the research. The research has sought to understand the role of empowerment and resilience in the development of communities. It has sought to understand the nature of the relationship between a local council and communities as experienced by participants. The issues that were valued and had meaning in the discourse and for participants, could be categorised thematically as shared (e.g. Problems, Power, Identity and Relationships). However, the extent to which they were understood, along with the expected outcomes diverged. These findings suggested a need for reflection, rather than recommendations for action. This supported previous reviews and research arguing for greater self-reflection and behaviour change in practice, and as perceived by the public (House of Lords, 2017c; Jennings et al., 2016). The recommendations and implications as such are articulated by theme and group (e.g. Policy, Practice and Research). How this chapter is located in the context of the thesis is illustrated at Appendix 35.

### 10.2 Areas for reflection

As explored within the thesis, there were limitations in the extent to which governments, communities and individuals could impact upon or direct events. Not least because of the challenges in ensuring a range of authentic voices were heard. In addition, there were changes in the time and place, means and methods of communication for groups, such as for younger people, which might not sit with established approaches. In the case of children this may also be compounded through interpretation of their voices by adult carers and professionals (Selwyn, 2016). This could have longer term implications for the credibility of decision making.

The research and its findings have therefore raised a series of questions that all groups could reflect upon or contemplate before pursuing engagement with each other. These are noted below:

1. Are relationships desired with communities, before roles within them?
2. Are judgements made about communities before joining up with them?
3. Have organisations sufficiently questioned and discovered their own intentions before deciding to act?
4. Is it possible to actively listen to an occurrence in communities before legislating for it?
5. Should recovery as a developmental concept be considered before resilience?
6. Should empowerment come before engagement, rather than engagement as empowerment?
7. Should consideration of current capability come before decisions over future capacity?

#### 10.2.1 Implications for policy (national and local)

The research concludes that there was a degree of resilience for those constructing policy and on the receiving end. This supported the continuing cycles and patterns of behaviour in the relationship. However, the extent that either group were truly empowered was uncertain. For those engaged in policy therefore, the research suggested that it was current approaches and related processes utilised when seeking to develop communities that were in 'crisis'. Therefore, abstinence from these existing approaches might be required and consideration given to the recovery model stages (Precontemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action, Maintenance and growth) and related characteristics. Such an approach might support alternative ways to construct and deliver policy.

#### 10.2.2 Implications for future research

The use of Discourse Analysis and IPA has offered insights supporting existing research that considers collaboration between actors and the state (Dickinson & Sullivan, 2014). This compulsive and compelling, if addictive cycle could be further explored, in terms of the 'how' and 'why' for its continuance. Given the selection of IPA, the findings have also reflected upon aspects of social psychology. Further work could continue to explore the parallels suggested between Community Development and Counselling (Rodrigues, 2017). Whilst there were opportunities to explore empowerment and resilience in the context of recovery for Community

Development, future research could also continue to explore aspects of self-discrepancy and regulation. This could further examine the way in which we were argued to perceive ourselves and resolve tensions that could arise in terms of 'actual', 'ideal' or 'ought' selves. This could offer insight into identity formulation, to complement the current governmental focus on behavioural change and 'nudges'.

As noted by Caygill (2017), few UK parliamentary recommendations arising from reviews could be described as major. The wealth of oral and written evidence, committee and government responses offered a significant opportunity to explore 'how' rather than 'what' worked. As seen with the researchers' FOI to the DCLG this would be aided by the improved operations of central government, interactions with local government and related organisations in terms of transparency and tacit knowledge. This would help explore current research in terms of the perceptions and attitudes toward the political process (Jennings et al., 2016).

As explored within the research many of the lessons and issues are not new. Participant histories are vital in understand the nature of relationships. Recent research has explored the continuing relevance of the Community Development Projects (Banks & Carpenter, 2017), and such efforts should be continued to offer balance and challenge to the persistent focus on the 'new' and transformation. Each approach has also offered specific avenues for further exploration:

Discourse Analysis:

1. Of definitions which are not straightforward, such as the 'buzzwords' (Cornwall & Brock, 2005) or 'fuzzwords' (O'Donnell & Shaw, 2016), how they are created and why they are accepted, even if misunderstood
2. The absence of emotion within language and differences regarding its use: e.g. Care v Caring
3. The impacts and unintended consequences of assumptions in use of language as interpreted by communities: e.g. 'stepping up' and 'needs'
4. The extent of transformative language used by the state and withdrawal of reformist voices

### Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis:

1. Could IPA be meaningfully used within other non-therapeutic settings (e.g. organisational interviews for appraisal and CPD)
2. The possibility to support the refinement of language in terms of style, tone and content of corporate communications with communities
3. The use of idiographic analysis to enrich use of case studies, complement segmentation and recognition of complexity in communities

#### 10.2.3 Implications for practice

For many participants there was a desire for a focus on relationships rather than roles, to be known before attempts to 'fix'. This again highlighted the potential for a focus on recovery rather than reorganisation. As noted within the literature Boundary Spanners were key individuals (Gilchrist, 2016; Williams, 2010) but were also at risk of being overwhelmed by their positions, bridging, bonding and brokering various networks (Long et al., 2013).

##### 10.2.3.1 Skills and attributes

Given the risks and potential impacts on the development of empowered and resilient communities, recognising, validating and supporting key skills, attributes, knowledge and experience would be of importance:

1. Awareness of aspirations and expectations involved in the development of communities
2. Understanding of communication and the dominance of financial, functional and technical language, its implications and consequences
3. Facilitation for communities to achieve goals beyond a predetermined agenda
4. Organisational acknowledgement of community needs for transparent approaches to asking and being asked questions
5. Caring and collaborative approaches embedded within commissioning cycles, when engaging with communities

##### 10.2.3.2 Tacit Knowledge

There was an understanding from all participants in terms of much that was unspoken, of tacit knowledge. This linked to tactics employed and levels of trust. The difficulty in seeing alternative approaches or opportunities to break the cycle suggested aspects of being unable, unwilling or unaware in terms of making improvements to the position. Choice of tactics and trust required reflection as to their long-term efficacy, with specific consideration to be given to such actions and behaviours that arose.

For example, did tacit knowledge support actions as:

1. Conduit or as control?
2. Influence or intervention?
3. Inspiration or Irrelevance?
4. Accuracy or ambiguity?

#### 10.2.3.3 Experience

Lastly, there were broad ranges of experiences that contributed to the development of skills and knowledge. These in a sense contributed to the Curriculum Vitae for those working in Community Development. For those engaging with communities there would need to be an awareness and willingness to explore how experiences shaped the following:

1. The meaning of public service and serving others
2. The meaning of partnership within a relationship
3. Recognition of common ground
4. Empathy and understanding of community work

### 10.3 Thesis conclusion

This research has highlighted the ambiguous nature of definition, strategies and communications published on the subject of community, empowerment and resilience, but also the increasing expectations placed on organisations such as local government. Delivery on such an enduring and wide-ranging agenda has brought divergence and convergence in meanings which should be thoughtfully considered before future action. The thesis presented here offered current challenge and future opportunities for study, as to whether the state in its various guises can listen and whether community development has a voice that can still be heard.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 - University of Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire County Council Studentship Further information for applicants (November 2014)

#### **University of Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire County Council Studentship: Summary of Research Project. 'The impact of County Council policy on the development of active and empowered communities'.**

The County Council is embarking on a new 3-year strategy – 'Together We Can' - which reflects its strategic response to the challenges and opportunities of diminishing resources, changing public expectations and an ageing population that is driving demand for public services.

The draft Council Strategy (which will be adopted in February 2014) is intended to bring about a radical change in its relationship with local people and places, and in particular, in the way that the services commissioned by the Council interact with the wider communities within which they work. The intention of the Strategy is that, as the Council reduces its role, communities will be encouraged to step forward and take on an increased role.

It is underpinned by a programme of initiatives designed to drive change across specific areas of the Council's business, and draws heavily on emerging ideas around demand management, behaviour change, social marketing and customer insight. As such, it is aiming to address the following key themes and questions:

1. Communities and their capacity:
  - a. What is the potential for communities to help themselves?,
  - b. How can that capacity be assessed, measured and unlocked?
  - c. What is the role of the public sector and in particular, councillors, in doing that?
  
2. Releasing capacity of communities:
  - a. What are the solutions to releasing the capacity of communities?
  - b. What are the factors that are critical to that success?
  - c. What role does physical infrastructure play in enabling stronger communities?
  - d. To what extent are Councils limited by a geographic-based view of communities?
  - e. What is the potential for unlocking the capacity of other forms of community (communities of interest or identity; virtual communities)
  
3. Community behaviour:
  - a. What drives the behaviour of communities?
  - b. To what extent do communities exhibit homogenous behaviours?
  - c. What are the implications for those seeking to understand and influence community behaviour?
  
4. Changing Council working practices:
  - a. What skills and behaviours do Councils need to develop if they are to develop a different sort of relationship with their citizens?

- b. What is the nature of the changing social contract?
- c. What is the impact of social media on the relationship between citizens and their public sector bodies

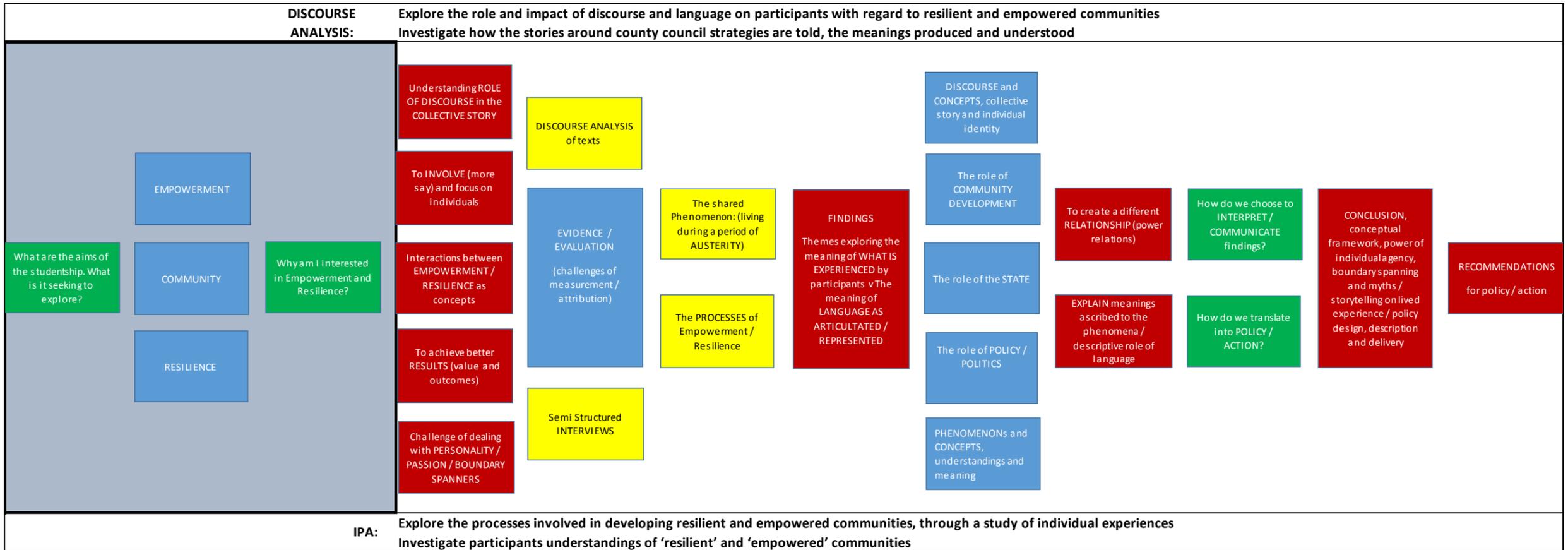
5. Role and influence of social marketing:

- a. How can social marketing be used to influence communities' behaviour?

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Appendix 2 - Diagrammatic representation of thesis structure. Grey shaded area notes position of Chapters 1/2 within the thesis

**The development of resilient and empowered communities in Gloucestershire during a period of austerity**

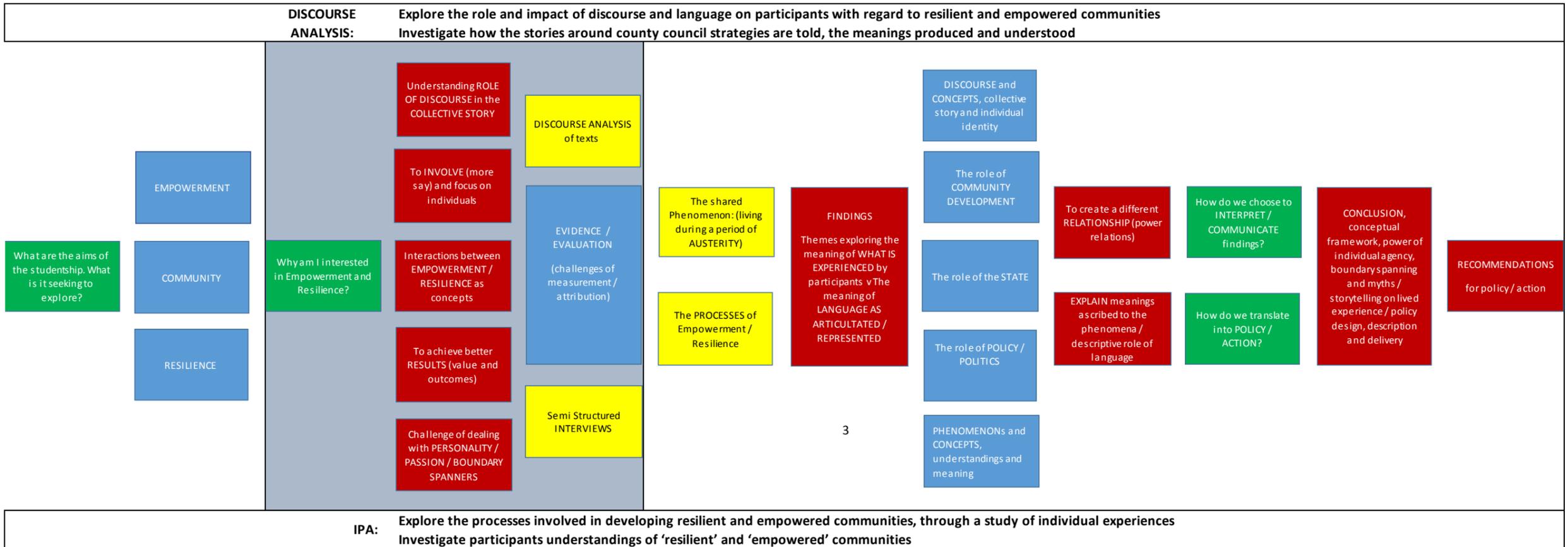


**KEY:**

- Literature Review / Background / Context
- Questions / Issues
- Method / Data Collection
- New / Original / Importance

Appendix 3 - Diagrammatic representation of thesis structure. Grey shaded area notes position of Chapters 3/4/5 within the thesis

**The development of resilient and empowered communities in Gloucestershire during a period of austerity**



KEY:

- Literature Review / Background / Context
- Questions / Issues
- Method / Data Collection
- New / Original / Importance

## Appendix 4 - Example Researcher Update to Supervisory Team

**Update for Studentship Meeting 30/01/2017 - Attending: DC, RA, JD, CB and JCE.**

### **1. Temporal Plan / Activities and milestones for Q3/4 2016/17**

#### **Overview of Thesis**

Updated chapter detail following last meeting and broken thesis into individual chapter word doc files as suggested. Started free writing first drafts of initial thinking as and where I can, then moving on across the chapter docs. Currently at approx. 11,000 words.

#### **Interviews**

**18 interviews completed. All transcribed, returned and agreed.** All willing to continue participation (for follow up interview) early in 2017 if additional interview required.

**Interviews approx. 8-12,000 words.** 1 interview to undertake.

Further readings of interviews following transcription, with notes made on reactions / reflections to all 18 interviews. All interviews uploaded to NVIVO. Coding from detail and aggregating up – initial sorting into major categories (continuing process, see below). Chunking into broad topic areas.

#### **Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

As per IPA methodology, further annotation along descriptive, linguistic and conceptual lines to build up themes across at an individual / cross interview basis.

#### **Current Grouping of Emerging Themes:**

Following the last meeting I have regrouped the 6 thematic areas into 5 – also linking them back to areas from the main literature review themes to see if / how this still maps across (in italics). These continue to develop and be reviewed in the light of the analysis over the coming months.

#### **Context**

- Austerity is not new, funding has been restricted for many decades (*Resilience*)
- Being 'done to' not 'done with' remains a theme (*Empowerment*)
- '7 day' services or stepping up are not new for those volunteering / caring (*Carers*)
- Myths, storytelling, assumptions – Significant events, organisations, attitudes, approach to / relationships / commissioning / tendering / fundraising / monitoring / reporting / job descriptions (*Behaviour*)
- Language of faith / belief – in people, that things will be ok, the future is secure
- Place or a sense of 'home' is important (*Motivation*)
- Low visibility / relevance of GCC and GCC LEOs, comms approaches and content. Challenge to use the resource effectively (*Engagement / Participation*)

#### **Positioning (of self)**

- Balance of three 'R's for participants when discussing community – 'Role(s)' how they describe community in the context of what they do, 'Romantic' what they think it should be like, and 'Reality' how it feels on the ground – its complex (*Boundary Spanning*)

#### **Appendix 4 – Cont'd**

- Relevance and preparation of education system to choices / decisions when working in Community Development. Are they qualified / 'professional' / credible? (*Empowerment / Evaluation*)
- 'Professionals' don't feel hands on enough (or credible?), yet those in 'hands on' positions don't always feel listened to – what is driving this / who is the target audience? (*Motivation*)
- Personal and formative influences / people and significant events – how that influences the present and whether people wish to get involved or walk away. Individuals matter (*Volunteering / Motivation / Behaviour*)
- Understanding and recognising little things can make a big difference / yet often taken for granted – how to recognise the everyday / 'ordinary' and measure success? (*Evaluation*)

#### **Problematising Community Development**

- Little space for personal reflection on own story and future – (*Empowerment / Resilience*)
- Fears – of change / coping / commissioners taking ideas or losing funding / councillors / advocates (*Motivation / Behaviour*)
- How do they make sense of the interplay / complexity?...Not something routinely shared / possibly fear of looking foolish, being too personal. Remains contradictory and conflicting (*Motivation / Behaviour*)
- Challenge of delivering holistic or integrated services, and describing the outcomes for funders is difficult – are we measuring the right things and is there the time to get an answer – particularly where issues are long term and generational? (*Evaluation*)
- Structural inequalities still feel very real to some participants (*Empowerment / Resilience*)
- How you are disadvantaged / accepted can be rapid. Judgements and assumptions. (*Behaviour*)
- There is a time when being hands on is enough and need to move on, having to start again (*Resilience*)

#### **Personal identity and skills**

- Sensitivity to timing and confidence to make quick decisions – early on in an event / job / change appears significant (*Empowerment / Behaviour*)
- Chains of relationships / events / experiences can build skills not just qualifications (*Empowerment / Networks / Evaluation*)
- Community development can be a selfish activity – in a good and bad way (*Networks / Behaviour*)
- Limited recognition of the local / informal aspects of support / commitment that participants provide to community and assets already in place (*Carers / Volunteering / Befriending / Evaluation*)
- Accessibility / Listening – important personal attributes (*Empowerment / Resilience / Behaviour*)

## Power

- Use of language e.g. ‘professionals’, ‘stepping up’, ‘capacity’ (*Empowerment / Resilience / Behaviour*)
- Vagueness of corporate language and definitions – who / which community(ies) are we talking about? (*Empowerment / Engagement / Participation*)
- Commissioning can assume change is required, new is always good (*Engagement / Participation / Evaluation / Models / Case Studies*)
- Responsiveness of state – e.g. too slow - complaints or too fast – commissioning (*Empowerment / Participation / Engagement*)
- Individuals versus policy for delivery at scale – sense that certain orgs / individuals are preferred (*Models / Case studies*)

## Discourse Analysis:

Have spent a lot of time trying to delimit the number of documents to be included – keeping focussed on the original research aim around empowerment and resilience. The ‘how’ discourse and language impacts on participants with regard to resilient and empowered communities. Using what the literature calls and ‘Elastic’ strategy where looking at emergence / disappearance of words phrases, literary devices over time – in terms of ‘continuity / change / rupture’

**E.g. BIG SOCIETY → BROKEN BRITAIN → SHARED SOCIETY → GLOBAL BRITAIN**

Some of the documents I’d thought were directly relevant for the discourse analysis (e.g. EU FP7 policy papers around measurement / beyond GDP indicators) I now think are not...still relevant for other areas of the thesis but not for primary analysis within this method. The issues are covered within policy documents which often reflect aspects of expert / popular / academic discourse.

The ‘canonical’ documents as I currently see them (**see Appendix 1**) are summarised.

Have also taken two 3 month periods looking at the weekly MJ ‘Top 10 bulletin’ (Popular discourse) to see where headlines relevant to research appear (**Appendix 2**).

Have also summarised >150 headlines (Popular discourse) from ‘Community Groups’ tag cloud on MJ website (**excerpt at Appendix 3**) across the PhD timeframe so far highlighting in red where stories appear most relevant to research, bold black relevant to a degree, and normal text less so.

(James your article from Mar 15 ‘Parishes answer planning problems’ is highlighted in red!) There are no tags for ‘Community’, ‘Empowerment’ or ‘Resilience’. Have also reviewed the ‘top 100’ story headlines from 2016 on Localgov.co.uk. None are highlighted.

## Themes:

- Direct references to community empowerment and resilience are largely absent in the main headlines.
- Analysing documents / stories in more detail where it does appear, it is still often the language of communities being something deficient / needs based / deficient – needing to change as the primary solution.
- Discussion set in the context of a *social care crisis*, *humanitarian crisis* in NHS A&E departments, and the need to tackle a *housing crisis* as a ‘moral duty’.

## **Appendix 4 – Cont'd**

- Tension between finance as either a part of problem or solution. E.g. strength of economy means we can do 'x', or we need to do 'x' this way because of economic situation.

So, questions around the dominant (whose?) agenda – with implications for how to really engage with communities and the type of message.

### **2. UoG / GCC Updates**

Met with CB in December for general catch up and to advise how I'd consider theory alongside current analysis. Will continue analysis and look at how theory has relevance – findings link to themes, themes link to theory. Meetings with RA in Dec and Jan to follow up from last studentship meeting - and discuss GCC meeting arranged between PB and selection of local charitable / community groups. Questions around nature of GGC relationship with orgs such as Fairshares. Implications for how / where best to bring change and prioritise / influence over longer term. E.g. LEOs, Commissioners, Carers.

### **3. Other activities/ updates:**

Continuing to share info on PhD / research papers within GCC as appropriate. Meetings in Dec / Jan with GCC Needs Analysis team to discuss community insight approach for GCC. Using ONS Social Capital categories as a framework. Reviewing GP Patient Survey and questions looking at local services / support. Meeting with DB in Feb re Community Connectors tender. Process extended due to TUPE issues.

- Attended 'Developing strength based conversations' session by Barnwood Trust – 24 November
- GCC STP plan 'One Gloucester' released Nov, consulting till 24 Feb 2017
- GCC consulting on future budget (open 17 Dec 2016, Closed Jan)
- GCC social prescribing results highlighted in Pulse Magazine Jan 2017
- Attending Uni of Glos 'Bracketing - the key to a phenomenological study?' 1 Feb 2017, 'Analysing qualitative data' 7 Mar 2017

### **4. Publication plan**

Discussed last time what journals / publications might be relevant given nature of research and themes. Suggest Community Development Journal, Journal of Social Policy, Journal of Public Administration, Local Government Studies, need to discuss further.

**Next Meeting: tbc**

**James Childs-Evans January 2017**

## Appendix 4 – Cont'd

### Literature / reports / products of interest for discussion relevant to research

#### 1. The Casey Review – December 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration>

Report on what could be done to boost opportunity and integration in the most isolated and deprived communities. 12 Recommendations. **Recommendation 1: *Building local communities' resilience in the towns and cities where the greatest challenges exist:***

Central government should support a new programme to help improve community cohesion. This could back area-based plans and projects addressing the key priorities identified in this review. It would see targeted support provided for projects, ideally evidence-based, that would help build more resilient communities. The Government should agree a final list of project criteria but these should include:

- The promotion of English language;
- Emancipating marginalised groups of women;
- Raising employment outcomes among the most marginalised groups;
- Increasing participation of women in the labour market;
- Improving IT literacy among parents in segregated areas;
- Boosting out of school mixing between young people – including through sporting activity;
- Other programmes with a clear focus on reducing segregation identified with local areas.

#### 2. Vibrant Economy Index - Grant Thornton – Nov 2016

<http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/insights/vibrant-economy-index/>

Vibrant Economy Index considers prosperity, but also dynamism and opportunity; inclusion and equality; health, wellbeing and happiness; resilience and sustainability; **and community, trust and belonging:** Vibrant communities have a lively and creative cultural life, and a clear identity that all its people are proud of. People feel safe, engage in community activities and trust the integrity of businesses and institutions. Indicators:

• Community assets (per 1,000 pop)	• Cultural amenities (per ha)
• Living alone, aged over 50 and over (%)	• Valid voter turnout (%)
• Violent crimes (per 1,000 pop)	• Ethnic diversity (score)

#### 3. Realising the Value – Health Foundation Economic Modelling tool – Nov 2016

<http://www.health.org.uk/economic-modelling-tool>

The Realising the Value programme developed a tool to help commissioners understand the impact of person / community-centred approaches into practice. The programme was commissioned by NHSE to help deliver the 5YFV, and led by The Health Foundation / Nesta. Estimates potential savings and wider social benefits of five approaches: peer support, self-management education, health coaching, asset-based approaches and group activities.

#### Appendix 4 – Cont'd

**4. Community development as micropolitics: Comparing theories, policies and politics in America and Britain. Akwugo Emejulu. Policy Press 2016**

The book examines the contradictory ideas and practices that have shaped this field in the US and the UK. Questions the assumption about the positions professionals and people occupy. Suggests that the professionals possess the ability to act and that the people don't is never questioned. Proposes it's not about the restructure of the state, but the comprehensiveness of its withdrawal.

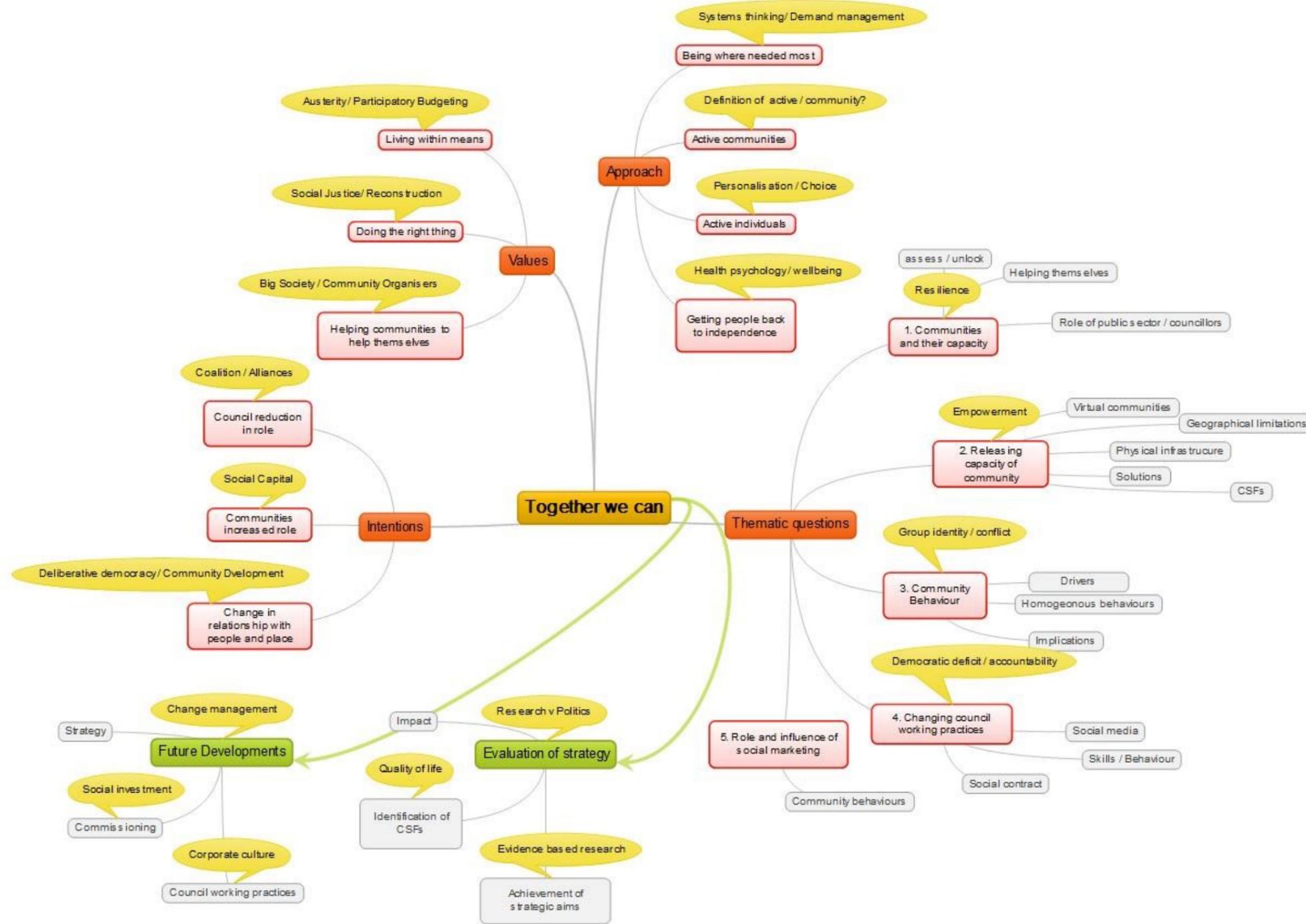
**5. Telling the story: Meaning making in a community narrative. Stapleton, K./ & Wilson, J. (2017). Journal of Pragmatics.**

Examines two separate tellings of a political/community narrative in a Belfast nationalist community. Both draw upon a shared template, which links sense-making and identity at different levels within the community. There are marked performative differences but also suggest that community narrative operates as a shared sense-making resource for members. Propose that narrative performances reflect power and the perceived purpose of the respective interviews, thereby providing a framework for identity positioning.

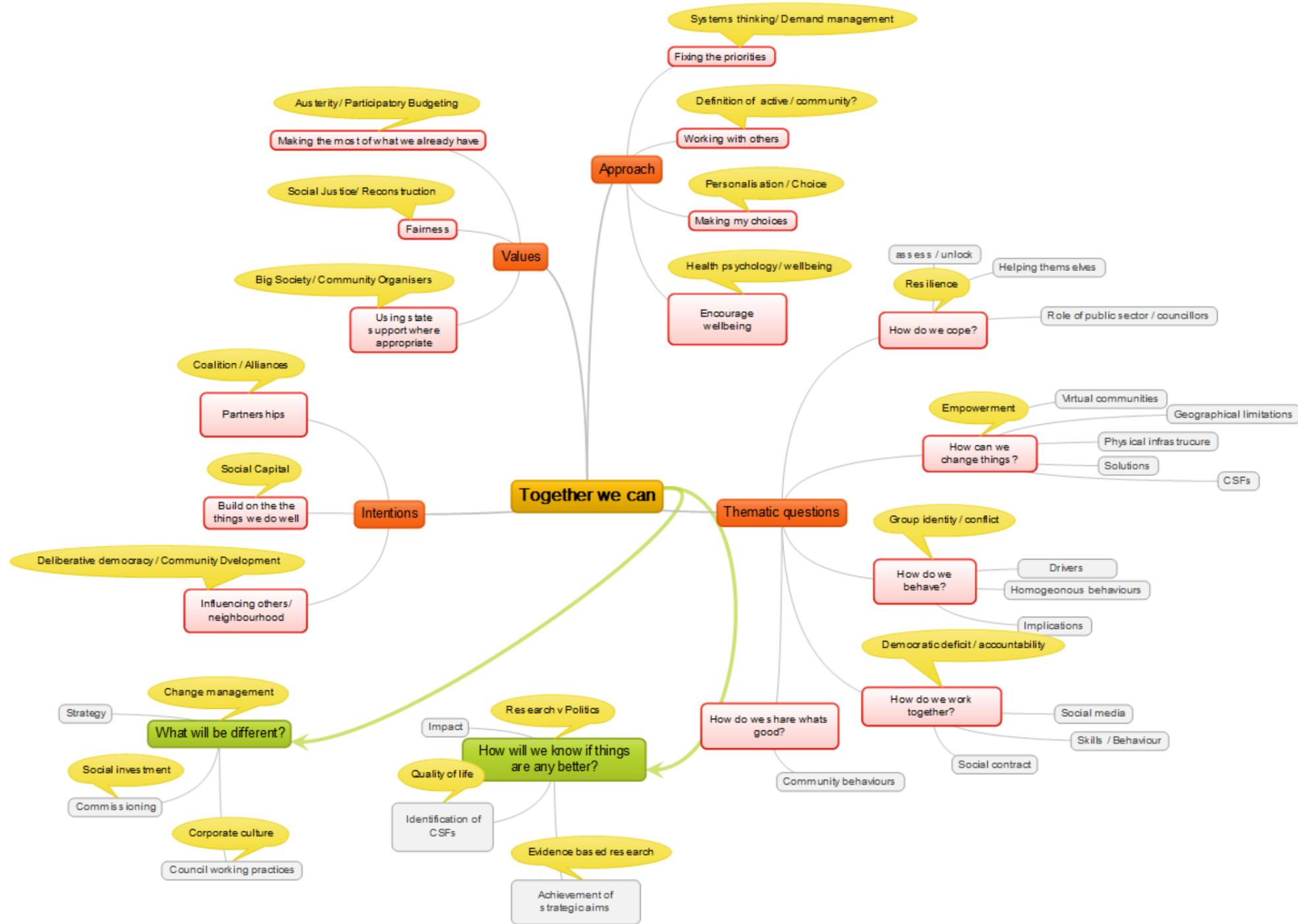
**6. Complying, transforming or resisting in the new austerity? Realigning social welfare and independent action among English voluntary organisations. Milbourne, L., & Cushman, M. (2015). Journal of Social Policy**

Discusses coalition rhetoric of curbing 'big government', that central government has taken considerable power while ostensibly ceding it to 'communities' under the guise of localism, and to corporate contractors through widespread outsourcing. Both strategies have extended the governable terrain into previously autonomous domains of civil society. Paradoxically, localism has reallocated controls from local government to central government, while devolving responsibility for welfare failures, but not power, to local groups of people.

Appendix 5 - Mindmap representation of original studentship advert



Appendix 5 – Cont'd - Mindmap representation of original studentship advert, updated to use less jargon



Appendix 6 - Poster presentation summarising early themes, delivered to a UoG Research Symposium (June 2015)



James Childs-Evans: University of Gloucestershire (UoG)

**1. Research Topic:**

The impact of County Council policy ('Together We Can') on the development of active and empowered communities



**2. Key Aspects:**

Commenced Feb 2015 as researcher also based in Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) Complex and political organisational environment in which to undertake enquiry  
Understanding and negotiation of requirements for PhD against outputs required for GCC

**3. Progress:**



- Regular meetings with GCC/ UoG Steering Group
- Reviews of literature and themes
- Invited onto GCC Active Communities Co-ordination group
- Attended variety of community meetings and public sessions of Council Cabinet, Health & Wellbeing Board
- Over 20 informal semi structured discussions held across GCC / Voluntary Sector
- Attended Community Development Journal Conference (July 2015), networking with Academics, Practitioners and Activists

**4. Themes:**



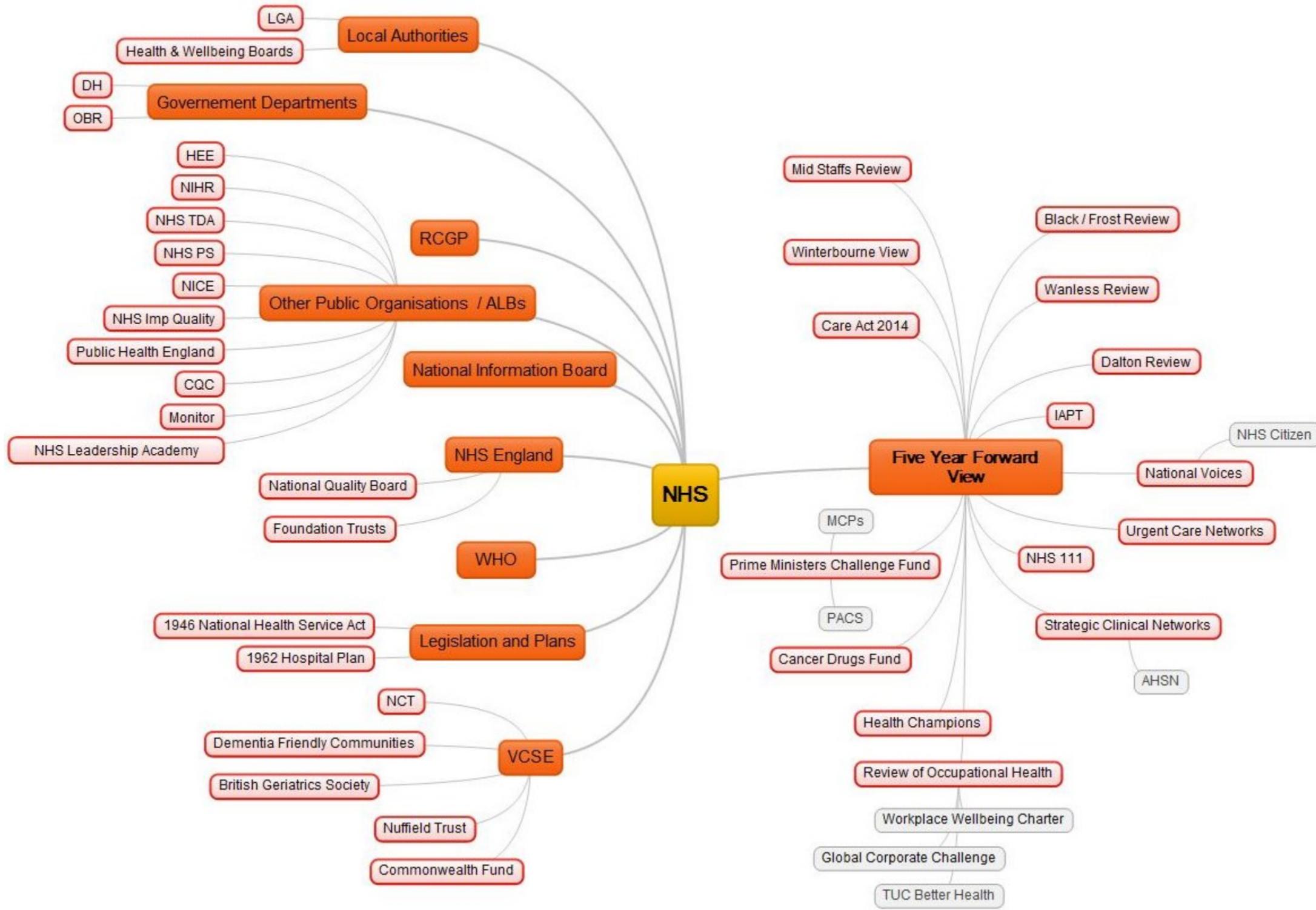
**5. Early implications:**

Use of participatory approaches and extent to which co-production is realistic / central to enquiry  
Access and engagement with formal / informal networks, consider how and why they form  
Understanding of individual life histories, role identity and self-identification  
Considerations for reciprocity / and potential to 'recruit' individuals to support GCC outcomes

**REFERENCES:** 1 Ennis, G. and D. West (2013). "Using social network analysis in community development practice and research: a case study." *Community Development Journal* 48(1): 40-57. 2 Moss, K., et al. (2014). "Listening to Community Health Workers: How Ethnographic Research Can Inform Positive Relationships Among Community Health Workers, Health Institutions, and Communities." *American Journal of Public Health* 104(5): e5-e6. 3 Cornwell, A. (2008). "Unpacking Participation: models, meanings and practices." *Community Development Journal* 43(3): 259-283. 4 Carpenter, J. and C. K. Myers (2010). "Why volunteer? Evidence on the role of altruism, image, and incentives." *Journal of Public Economics* 94: 911-920. 5 Laing, M. and S. Sprang (2014). "Enabling the health and wellbeing of carers through district nursing support." *British journal of community nursing* 19(7): 346-351. 6 Stoker, G. (2010). "The Microfoundations of Governance: Why Psychology Rather Than Economics Could Be the Key to Better Inter-governmental Relations." *Social and Economic Studies*: 3-28. 7 Stoker, G. and A. Housley (2010). "Motivation, behaviour and the microfoundations of public services." *London 2022*: 23-8. 8 Lowndes, V. and S. Squires (2012). "Care, collaboration and creativity." *Public Money & Management* 32(5): 401-408. 9 Public Health England. (2015). *A guide to community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing*. PHE Publications.

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Appendix 7 - Mindmap visually representing the scope of one text (NHS Five Year Forward View), linkages with other reports highlighting the complexity.



Appendix 8 – The 23 texts selected to incorporate within the full analysis, summarised and ordered chronologically, noting relevance to the research

Name	Date	Source	Relevant Themes re Communities / Empowerment / Resilience
1 David Cameron - Big Society	Jul-10	Cabinet Office	Culture change
			Feeling free and powerful to help yourself and own community
			'Vanguard' communities being training ground of change
2 Decentralisation and the Localism Bill: an essential guide	Dec-10	DCLG	From Big Government to Big Society
			Lift the burden of bureaucracy
			Empower communities to do things their way
			Increase local control of public finance
			Diversify the supply of public services
			Open up government to public scrutiny
			Strengthen accountability to local people
3 A plain English guide to the Localism Act	Nov-11	DCLG	Power shift from Government to Communities and Individuals
			Big Society
4 Building Safe Active Communities - Third Report	Feb-12	DCLG	Building the Big Society
			Tackling problem drinking
			A 'hub' for community activists - two clicks to success
			Getting public servants out into the community
5 Ed Milliband - One Nation Labour	Jan-13	Fabian Society	One nation Labour
			Confident communities
			Community organising to build relationships
6 The Five Year Forward View	Oct-14	NHSE	Empowering patients
			Engaging communities
			The NHS as a social movement
7 The Implications of Devolution for England	Dec-14	Cabinet Office	How powers have been passed to the devolved administrations
			Transfer of powers from central government to local communities in England
			Options for further devolution and decentralisation
8 Whose Society? - The Final Big Society Audit	Jan-15	Civil Exchange	Big Society
			Community Empowerment
9 A guide to community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing	Feb-15	PHE / NHE	Why work with communities?
			Communities as building blocks for health
			A family of community-centred approaches
			Health outcomes and evidence
10 The places we live in Gloucestershire	Apr-15	Barnwood Trust	Friendly neighbours and a sense of community
			Communities and social capital

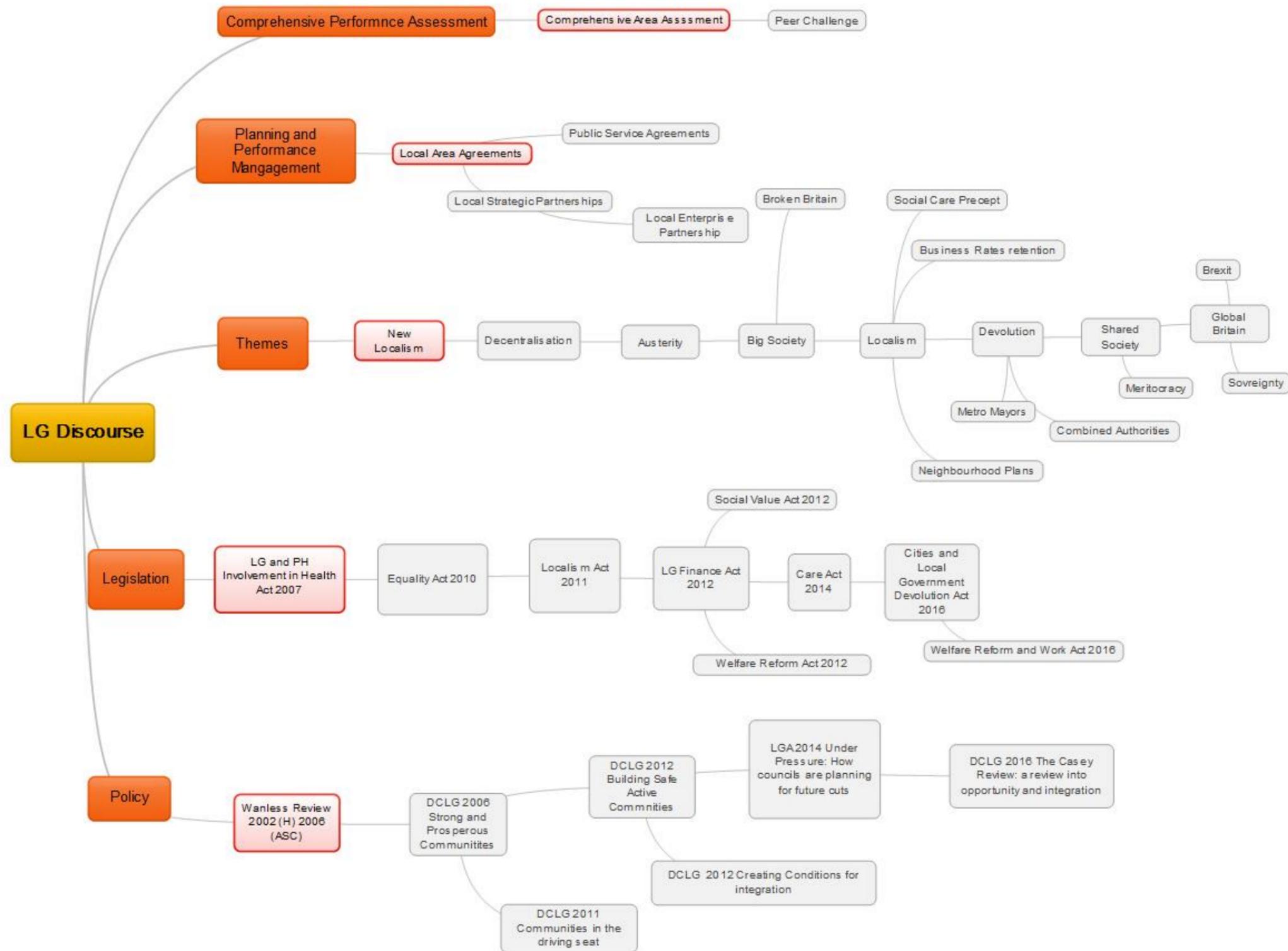
Appendix 8 – Cont'd

11	Joint Enabling Active Communities Policy	Jul-15	GCC	Communities as a group of people with a common interest or identity or who share a common place
				Enable local communities to become more active, stronger and more sustainable
				Using the strengths of individuals, carers and local communities, to transform the quality of care and support
				Draw upon, and stimulate the provision of, the diverse range of assets within communities
12	Community Capital: The Value of Connected Communities	Oct-15	RSA	Connected communities
				Realising social value from community capital
				Value of connected communities - community capital dividend
13	Making a difference in rural communities throughout England 2014/15	Dec-15	ACRE	Voice of rural communities
				Supporting communities to take action themselves
				Investment and making a difference
14	Delivering the Forward View: NHS planning guidance 2016/17 – 2020/21	Dec-15	NHSE	Place based planning for local communities
				STPs - engagement with community partners
				New CCG Assessment Framework
				Six principles for engagement
15	MTC2 Strategy Update 2016/17	Jan-16	GCC	Relationships with communities
				Using the resources available for Gloucestershire people and communities
				Helping communities help themselves
				Active Communities - build resilience / empower for community action
16	Joint review of partnerships and investment in voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in the health and care sector	May-16	DH / NHSE / PHE	Living well at home as part of welcoming, inclusive communities
				Release the full potential of communities.
				Below the radar groups
				Volunteering and social action addressing service-resistant problems like loneliness and stigma
				People and communities board
17	One Gloucestershire - Transforming Care, Transforming Communities	Autumn 2016	GCCG on behalf of 'Gloucestershire System'	Creation of 16 health and social care communities around GP clusters / Social 'movement'
				Enabling Active Communities – building a new sense of personal responsibility and promoting independence for health

Appendix 8 – Cont'd

18	New approaches to value in health and care	Sep-16	Realising the value consortium	Assessing value in health and care, as it is experienced and created by people and communities
				Being independent
				Feeling supported
				Being in control of decisions and of support
				Feeling connected to others (socially and culturally)
				Being able to do the things that are important to them
19	Kinder Communities: The power of everyday relationships	Oct-16	Carnegie / JRF	The impact of everyday relationships and kindness on individual and societal wellbeing
				The impact of everyday relationships and kindness on community empowerment
				Develop a theory of change with attention on those who experience poverty and disadvantage
20	Adult social care funding: 2016 state of the nation report	Nov-16	Local Government Association	Responsibilities / expectations of the individual, family, community and state in supporting older and disabled people.
				Tension between prioritising statutory duties for greatest needs and investing in services / communities that prevent / reduce future demand
				Communities / people in them need the whole system from government to local volunteer groups to work together more
21	The Casey Review - A review into opportunity and integration	Dec-16	DCLG	Community Cohesion
				Community Leadership
				Building of empowerment and resilience to promote integration
22	ITT Community Connectors Tender	Dec-16	GCC / GCCG	Make use of strengths in the local community
				Create capacity in the community and grow the volunteer workforce
				Brokering collaborative working
				Developing local solutions to meet local needs
				Promoting innovation
23	Theresa May - Shared Society	Jan-17	Prime Ministers Office	Family, community, citizenship
				Not just value of individual rights but focus on responsibilities to one another
				Exclusion from social and political discourse

Appendix 9 - Mindmap representation of local iterative discussions to define and delimit boundaries of local government discourse



Appendix 10 - Excerpts from Municipal Journal 'Top 10' Weekly Stories: February to March 2017

Week	Week Ending	1 Headline	1 Sub Headline	2 Headline	2 Sub Headline	3 Headline	3 Sub Headline	4 Headline	4 Sub Headline	5 Headline	5 Sub Headline
12	03/03/2017	<b>Birmingham denies Rogers in line for £500k exit package</b>	Birmingham City Council has denied that outgoing chief executive Mark Rogers is in line for a £500,000 payoff.	<b>Council steps back from unitary referendum plans</b>	Lincolnshire CC has backtracked on the idea of a unitary referendum after objections from the districts.	<b>EXCLUSIVE: Whitehall-backed leadership drive latest austerity casualty</b>	A 'powerful' new leadership offer for local government backed by No 10 is the latest casualty of shifting Whitehall priorities, The MJ can reveal.	<b>Call for IR35 delay</b>	Senior local government personnel have urged Whitehall to delay the introduction of strict new anti-tax avoidance rules for public sector contractors.	<b>Bury chief suspended amid investigation</b>	Bury MBC has suspended its chief executive, Mike Owen, pending the full outcome of an independent review into the handling of a historical safeguarding case.
11	24/02/2017	<b>Rogers to leave beleaguered Brum</b>	Birmingham City Council has announced the departure of chief executive Mark Rogers in the latest development at the struggling authority.	<b>EXCLUSIVE: Whitehall-backed leadership drive latest austerity casualty</b>	A 'powerful' new leadership offer for local government backed by No 10 is the latest casualty of shifting Whitehall priorities, The MJ can reveal.	<b>Call for IR35 delay</b>	Senior local government personnel have urged Whitehall to delay the introduction of strict new anti-tax avoidance rules for public sector contractors.	<b>DoH set to honour cap on care costs</b>	The Department of Health has insisted it will stand by its pledge to cap the costs of care from 2020.	<b>EXCLUSIVE: 'Time to stop the lies'</b>	Key figures call for sector-wide debate on the future of local government amid claims of denials over finances.
10	17/02/2017	<b>EXCLUSIVE: 'Time to stop the lies'</b>	Key figures call for sector-wide debate on the future of local government amid claims of denials over finances.	<b>EXCLUSIVE: 'It's make or break time' annual finance survey</b>	Results of the latest LGiU/The MJ annual finance survey lead to stark warnings on the fiscal future of local government.	<b>Money talks</b>	Dan Peters reveals the results of the latest LGiU/The MJ annual finance survey which give a stark warning for the future unless drastic action is taken.	<b>Councils call for academy intervention powers</b>	Councils have called for new powers to help transform struggling academy schools.	<b>The journey is just beginning</b>	In the wake of the recent raft of national policy announcements Mike Emmerich says it is time for the sector to take firm action and make sure this pivotal moment isn't lost.
9	10/02/2017	<b>EXCLUSIVE: 'It's make or break time' annual finance survey</b>	Results of the latest LGiU/The MJ annual finance survey lead to stark warnings on the fiscal future of local government.	<b>Councils will have crucial role in housing</b>	Councils face significant new demands under ministers' plan to kick-start Britain's 'broken' housing market – but critics warned the reforms do not go far enough.	<b>Porter: Local government threw devolution back in ministers' faces</b>	The country's most influential council leader has proclaimed that 'devolution is dead' and suggested local government is to blame.	<b>Surrey CC scraps plans for 15% council tax referendum</b>	Surrey CC has scrapped plans to hold a referendum on whether to increase council tax by 15%.	<b>Districts back county reorganisation plan</b>	Two district councils have come out in support of Oxfordshire CC's proposal for a countywide unitary.
8	03/02/2017	<b>EXCLUSIVE: Lack of confidence in adult social care strategy exposed</b>	The true scale of feeling across local government about the escalating social care crisis is revealed by the results of an exclusive survey.	<b>Value of council contracts falls after Brexit</b>	The value of contract awards in local government fell following the Brexit vote – despite a surge in public tenders across other sectors, new figures have revealed.	<b>Northern leaders call for May to reconsider Brexit 'snub'</b>	Prime minister Theresa May has been urged to visit the north of England for Brexit talks as leaders claimed she was neglecting the region.	<b>How do we solve a problem like care?</b>	Funding pressures in adult social care have permeated the national press lately. Dan Peters analyses the findings of an Independent Age/The MJ survey, and Andrew Kaye says all eyes are now on the prime minister.	<b>Keeping a grip in a post-Brexit world</b>	As children's services embark on another year in which nothing is certain, Nick Whitfield offers a few constants – from the joys of Eurovision to the constant need to cope with change.

Appendix 10 - Cont'd – Excerpt MJ 'Top 10' Weekly Stories: September to October 2016

Week	Week Ending	1 Headline	1 Sub Headline	2 Headline	2 Sub Headline	3 Headline	3 Sub Headline	4 Headline	4 Sub Headline	5 Headline	5 Sub Headline
12	07/10/2016	<b>DoLS rise to record level</b>	The number of applications for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) received by councils has continued to rise to a record level, new figures have revealed.	<b>County faces 'government takeover' after financial collapse warning</b>	Ministers could be forced to take over the running of Lancashire CC this Parliament if they do nothing to address the council's bleak financial situation, the council's finance spokesman has warned.	<b>Lord Porter 'schizophrenic' on mayors</b>	The point of a metro mayor is to 'take the blame' if something goes wrong, Local Government Association chairman Lord Porter has said.	<b>Ministers pledge £5bn to 'double' housebuilding pace</b>	Tackling the housing crisis is a 'moral duty,' according to communities secretary Sajid Javid, who has pledged £5bn to 'double' the pace of housebuilding.	<b>Cook to leave Kettering in management shake-up</b>	Kettering BC's chief executive David Cook has been replaced in a senior management shake-up.
11	23/09/2016	<b>Burnham: Hand care to NHS</b>	The 'only answer' to the problems facing adult social care is to bring care services into the NHS, Greater Manchester's mayoral hopeful Andy Burnham has argued.	<b>Sheffield city region mayor not 'a done deal'</b>	Plans for a directly-elected mayor for the Sheffield city region are not a 'done deal' despite government comments to the contrary, councillors have claimed.	<b>May urged to deliver 'grown-up' devolution deals'</b>	Theresa May must launch 'grown-up' devolution deals if the country is to overturn a £190bn inclusivity gap between regions, according to a report.	<b>Brexit poses 'severe' risk to care sector</b>	Care services could be at risk as Brexit fuels uncertainty about the status of tens of thousands of EU workers, a report has found.	<b>Party time</b>	With the Conservative and Labour party conferences fast approaching, Liam Booth-Smith and Paul Wheeler examine how the parties are faring on local government policy and where national approaches are impacting on local politics.
10	16/09/2016	<b>'Trailblazing' chief Sir Howard Bernstein to step down</b>	Manchester City Council chief executive Sir Howard Bernstein has announced he will be standing down next year after almost half a century at the authority.	<b>Councils poised to join grammar schools race</b>	Local authorities could start building new schools again under Theresa May's plans to create more grammar schools.	<b>Reorganisation rivalries return</b>	Councils have resumed hostilities as the debate over local government reorganisation returns to the agenda.	<b>Minister hints at starter home backtrack</b>	The new housing minister has signaled a shift in government policy away from its focus on homeownership.	<b>Missing a trick on reorganisation</b>	Calls from backbench MP Alec Shelbrooke for far-reaching local government reform have failed to address the real opportunities available, argues Cllr Ken Browse.
9	09/09/2016	<b>No lights out for nights out</b>	Written just before Islington LBCs decision on the future of Fabric nightclub, Claire Fox urges councils to combat nightclub closures and ditch their over-zealous approach to licensing.	<b>Let's equip ourselves for change</b>	In his final column before switching to Redbridge LBC, the NLGN's Simon Parker highlights the importance of local authorities adopting – and making the most of – a digital way of working.	<b>Wilshaw: Councils must take responsibility for all schools</b>	The Government's outgoing chief inspector of schools has called on local authority bosses to 'stand up and be counted' and take responsibility for all schools.	<b>Scrap all districts, says backbench Tory MP</b>	A backbench Tory MP has called for all the district councils in England to be scrapped, as boroughs in Buckinghamshire commission a report into the future of local government in the county.	<b>Homelessness Reduction Bill will 'increase homelessness'</b>	A proposed Bill to tackle homelessness is 'overly simplistic', will pile pressure on resources and will make more people homeless, local authorities have warned.
8	02/09/2016	<b>Let's equip ourselves for change</b>	In his final column before switching to Redbridge LBC, the NLGN's Simon Parker highlights the importance of local authorities adopting – and making the most of – a digital way of working.	<b>Staff call for post-Brexit settlement rethink</b>	More than three-quarters of council staff believe the Government should rethink its four-year funding settlement to local government following the EU referendum.	<b>MPs warn public health cuts are a 'false economy'</b>	Removing the ringfence around public health grants could put local authority areas with higher deprivation and poor health at an even greater disadvantage, MPs warned today.	<b>Barclays scraps council LOBO loans</b>	Barclays has become the first bank to scrap high interest Lender Option, Borrower Option (LOBO) loans for councils.	<b>London calling</b>	Heather Jameson speaks to Claire Kober, new chair of London Councils, about devolution post-Brexit and how this will impact Londoners.

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## Appendix 11 - The MJ 'TAG CLOUD' January 2017

Key tags concern Finance, Budgets and Whitehall



### THE MJ 'TAG CLOUD' December 2016



### THE MJ 'TAG CLOUD' November 2016



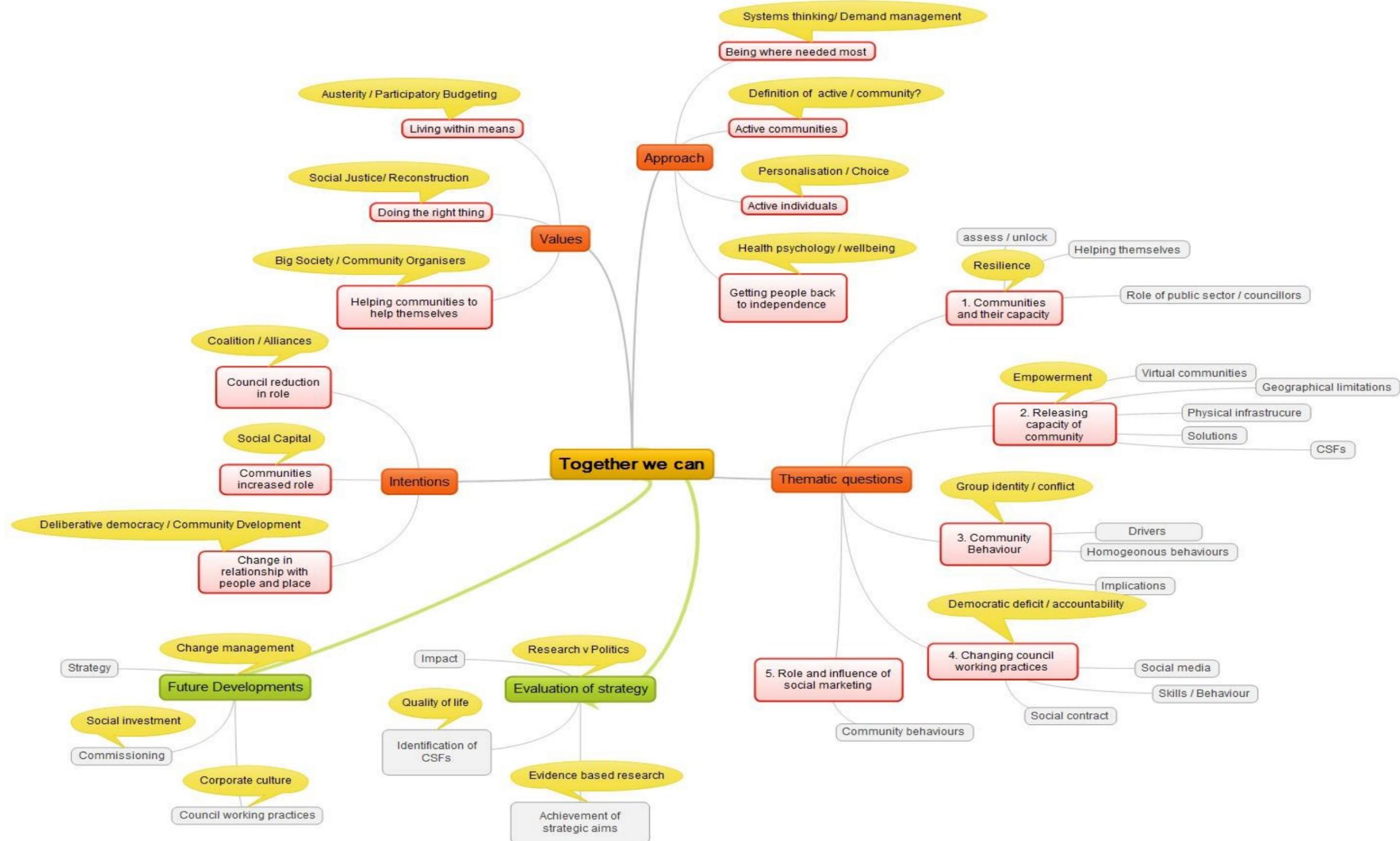
## Appendix 12 - Excerpt from 'LocalGov' news website. Listing top 100 stories for 2016.

The main focus of popular stories were linked to finance, with limited coverage in the top 100 of community empowerment or resilience related news.

### Top 100: Our most popular local government stories of 2016

1. Red-light district given the go ahead in Leeds
2. What does Brexit mean for local government?
3. Five councils sign 'ground breaking' outsourcing contracts
4. Unison accepts local government pay offer
5. Local government staff recognised in New Year's Honours list
6. Stalemate over local government pay deal
7. Council pension scheme must be replaced, says think tank
8. Budget 2016: Councils delivered financial blow
9. MP calls for overhaul of Britain's 'faltering local government system'
10. Hundreds of jobs at risk as councils publish budget plans
11. Council introduces levy on driveways
12. Budget 2016: Public sector pensions will remain 'sustainable', claims chancellor
13. Row breaks out over council pay deal
14. Council's 'insensitivity' to blame for employee's suicide, coroner says
15. Stress levels of council staff reaching 'breaking point'
16. Ex-council worker jailed for £1m fraud
17. Councils facing bill of millions to implement Pay to Stay policy
18. Two London councils to share a workforce
19. Local government figures recognised in Queen's birthday honours
20. Controversial Housing Bill to become law
21. Budget 2016: Osborne unveils further devolution deals
22. Councils have credit rating downgraded after Brexit
23. Lawyers call for Parliamentary vote on Brexit
24. Term-time absence case thrown out by court
25. Outgoing council chief executive says he 'longs' for the day council is scrapped
26. FOI request reveals rise in council suspensions over social media breaches
27. Mass data breach at Nottinghamshire council
28. Council offers £40,000 cash in place of Right to Buy discount
29. Nurseries abandon 30-hour free childcare pilot due to lack of funding
30. Tech entrepreneur dies after hitting pothole
31. 24 councils could face legal action over high-interest loans
32. Councils tell homeless 'to sleep rough'
33. Brexit could cost Cornwall 'hundreds of millions', councillor says
34. Council leaders warn Brexit would 'wreak havoc' on services
35. Frontline services threatened by 'radical shake-up' in council funding
36. Corbyn defiant as council leaders join resignation calls
37. Council leaders need a 'cultural revolution' finds report
38. Historic settlement promises £300m of transitional funding for councils
39. Councils propose joint management to make savings
40. Budget 2016: Local government left 'deeply anxious'

Appendix 13 – Mindmap of initial research brief



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## Appendix 14 - Development of interview schedule – January – March 2016

### 1. Initial Interview Schedule

The purpose of the research is to understand how.....

No right or wrong answers

Empowerment: Give someone the power to do something, or confidence to do something in controlling their life

Resilience: The ability to recover from, or strength to withstand difficulties

Community: Relate / Connect / In contact with others: from a specific place, similar interests, similar identity (People, Things, Ideas)

Q1: Could you tell me a bit about yourself – what is it like to be you?

- Where you live / work
- Important events in your life
- What are the things you feel good at

Q2: Can you tell me about any places / people or possessions that are important to you?

Why are they important, what is their meaning?

Q3: Can you think of a time when you had a challenge, problem or difficulty to overcome?

Q4: Can you think of an occasion when you felt particularly confident?

- Times that were positive
- Times that were difficult

Did someone help you? How? How did you experience it?

Q5: What do you think of when I say 'County Council'?

State / Other Councils / Agency / Person

Q6: Has a Council been involved in your life?

Do you think it should be involved?

Q7: What does Meeting the Challenge – Together We Can – mean to you?

What do the words: community / empowerment / resilience mean to you?

Q8: Any else you would like to share?

## **Appendix 14 – Cont’d**

### **2. First draft of interview schedule for initial series of interviews**

**Research Aim:** To explore the social processes of resilience and empowerment alongside social and political discourse. To understand their relationship and role in the development of resilient and empowered communities in Gloucestershire, during a period of austerity.

The goals of the research are to:

1. a) Explore the processes involved in developing resilient and empowered communities, through a study of individual lived experiences (Elected councillors, Council Officers, Voluntary Sector employees, Volunteers, Carers, living and working in Gloucestershire)  
b) Investigate participants’ understandings of ‘resilient’ and ‘empowered’ communities
  
2. a) Explore the role and impact of discourse and language on participants with regard to resilient and empowered communities  
b) Investigate how the stories around county council strategies are told, the meanings produced and understood
  
3. Draw together findings from goals 1/2 to develop a conceptual framework describing the relationship between lived experience and discourse surrounding the development of resilient and empowered communities

### **To share with participants**

Provide consent form

Summary:

I am a PhD student at the University of Gloucestershire working with Gloucestershire County Council – my area of research concerns the development of resilient and empowered communities. I will be exploring how participants feel about their community, roles that people play in their day to day life and how County Council is / is not involved with local people.

This is a type of interview where there are no right or wrong answers, as the aim is to listen to your experiences. Some things may seem obvious, because they are what you know and experience first-hand - but it is important to spend time discussing these in detail. So please feel free to share any thoughts, feelings or memories no matter how small. The important thing is to hear about your life – for example:

- People, places and events that might have been significant for you
- How confident you feel in controlling your life

## Appendix 14 – Cont’d

- Times that you might have had to deal with difficult situations
- How organisations such as GCC might best help those who need it

Topic / Rationale	Question	Participant Keywords
Descriptive question to set community context around participants lives, with descriptive and narrative prompts to aid understanding	Q1: Could you tell me a bit about yourself? Prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where do you live / work in Gloucestershire?</li> <li>• How would you describe yourself as a person?</li> <li>• Important events in your life – what happened - How did they feel?</li> </ul>	
Follow on descriptive question to probe into community context, with narrative and descriptive prompts	Q2: Can you tell me more about any places / people or possessions that are important to you? Prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did they come to be important?</li> <li>• Why they are important and what do they mean to you?</li> </ul>	
Narrative question on resilience, with evaluative prompts	Q3: Can you think of a time when you had a challenge, problem or difficulty to overcome? Prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you overcome the situation?</li> <li>• How were things afterwards?</li> </ul>	
Narrative question on empowerment, with evaluative prompts	Q4: Can you think of an occasion when you felt particularly confident? Prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did someone help you – and how?</li> <li>• How were things afterwards?</li> </ul>	
Descriptive question on understanding and role of County Council, with structural, evaluative and comparative prompts	Q5: What does the ‘County Council’ mean to you? Prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What role did they play?</li> <li>• How did that go – were there stages of involvement?</li> <li>• Do you think it should be involved – what would it be like for you if it wasn’t?</li> </ul>	

Descriptive question on understanding and role of other groups / organisations, with structural, evaluative and comparative prompts	<p>Q6: Has another Council / Agency / Charity / Community Group been involved in your life?</p> <p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What role did they play?</li> <li>• How did that go – were there stages of involvement?</li> <li>• Do you think it should be involved – what would it be like for you if it wasn't?</li> </ul>	
Probing question to understand language used by 'corporate' documents	<p>Q7: What does Meeting the Challenge – Together We Can – mean to you?</p> <p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do the words: community / empowerment / resilience / austerity mean to you?</li> </ul>	
Open question to collect any areas of interest to participant and provide opportunities for snowball sample	<p>Q8: Any else you would like to share?</p> <p>Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there someone else that you think it would be useful to talk to?</li> </ul>	

### 3. Final interview schedule following first three interviews

**Research Aim:** To explore the social processes of resilience and empowerment alongside social and political discourse. To understand their relationship and role in the development of resilient and empowered communities in Gloucestershire, during a period of austerity.

The goals of the research are to:

4. a) Explore the processes involved in developing resilient and empowered communities, through a study of individual lived experiences (of Elected councillors, Council Officers, Voluntary Sector employees, Volunteers, Carers & those living and/or working in Gloucestershire)
- b) Investigate participants' understandings of 'resilient' and 'empowered' communities
5. a) Explore the role and impact of discourse and language on participants with regard to resilient and empowered communities
- b) Investigate how the stories around county council strategies are told, the meanings produced and understood; & resulting actions

## Appendix 14 – Cont'd

6. Draw together findings from goals 1/2 to develop a conceptual framework describing the relationship between lived experience and discourse surrounding the development of resilient and empowered communities

### To share / discuss with each participant:

1. Overview of research, request for participation and informed consent form
2. Summary (already included with consent form):

I am a PhD student at the University of Gloucestershire (UoG) working with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC). My research will explore a variety of areas, including the roles that people play in the day to day life of their community, how participants feel about the communities (in which they might live, work, volunteer or provide care), and how the County Council is engaging with and involving local people. I would like to invite you to be part of this study, to take part in an interview and ask you some questions about these areas. Involvement is voluntary and you will only be included if you want to take part and provide your permission to do so.

The areas of interest I have and would like to talk with you about include the following:

- People, places and events that may have been significant for you or your community
- Times when your community worked well or came together
- Times when your community has had to deal with difficult situations
- How you feel organisations such as GCC might best work with local people

In the interview there are no right or wrong answers as the aim is to listen and understand your opinion, experiences and perspectives. Some things may seem obvious, because they are what you know and experience first-hand - but please feel free to share any thoughts, feelings or memories no matter how small. Our lived experiences can help in understanding the social issues that local communities face, and is noted as a focus for community work research.

*The interview will be recorded in full for transcription and analysis; **but all information will be held in confidence.***

## Appendix 14 - Cont'd

### 3. Interview Schedule

Question type / topic and rationale	Question	Participant key words / statements
<p>Descriptive question to set community context around participants lives, with descriptive and narrative prompts to aid understanding</p>	<p>Q1: Could you tell me a bit about yourself? Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where do you live / work / volunteer / provide care in Gloucestershire?</li> <li>• How long? Always in the same area?</li> <li>• How would you describe yourself?</li> <li>• What does the word 'community' mean to you? / How would you describe your community(ies)? <i>(there may not be an association with a community – if so explore)</i></li> <li>• Important events in your community – what happened - How did they feel? <i>(this might link to Q3/4 – if so use those question prompts)</i></li> </ul>	
<p>Follow up to probe into community context, with narrative and descriptive prompts</p>	<p>Q2: Can you tell me more about any places / people / possessions or values that are important to you? Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did they come to be important? <i>(this might link to Q3/4 – if so use those question prompts)</i></li> <li>• Why they are important</li> <li>• What do they mean to you?</li> </ul>	
<p>Narrative question on empowerment, with evaluative prompts</p>	<p>Q3: Can you think of an occasion(s) when your community worked well, or came together? Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did someone help you – and how?</li> <li>• How were things afterwards?</li> <li>• Are you aware of other communities that work well or come together?</li> </ul>	

<p>Narrative question on resilience, with evaluative prompts</p>	<p>Q4: Can you think of a time when your community had a challenge, problem or difficulty to overcome? Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you overcome the situation?</li> <li>• How were things afterwards?</li> <li>• Did you learn anything from the experience?</li> </ul>	
<p>Descriptive question on understanding and role of County Council, with structural, evaluative and comparative prompts</p>	<p>Q5: What does the 'County Council' mean to you? Prompts: <i>It may have no meaning or be descriptive – e.g. 'helpful / wasteful' etc. If so will ask for further explanation. If a service or functional example then:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What role do /did they play and what did they do? <i>(may be individual / team / function / departmental etc. response)</i></li> <li>• Was this a single occasion, or were they involved over a period of time?</li> <li>• Why and how did they get involved?</li> <li>• Do you think the County should be involved in communities – what would it be like for you if it wasn't?</li> </ul> <p><i>County: Education, Social Care (living independently / safely) Libraries District: Council Tax, Refuse Collection, Housing Both: Highways, Planning, Police</i></p>	
<p>Descriptive question on understanding and role of other groups / organisations, with structural, evaluative and comparative prompts</p>	<p>Q6: Has another Council / Agency / Charity / Community Group been involved in your life? Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What role do /did they play and what did they do?</li> <li>• Was this a single occasion, or were they involved over a period of time?</li> <li>• Why and how did they get involved?</li> <li>• Do you think that org should be involved in communities – what would it be like for you if it wasn't?</li> </ul>	

<p>Probing question to understand visibility of, and language used by 'corporate' documents (support conceptual framework and discourse analysis)</p>	<p>Q7: Are you aware of the County Council having to make decisions over how it funds services?  Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do the words: empowerment / resilience / austerity mean to you, if anything?</li> <li>• What does Meeting the Challenge – Together We Can – mean to you, if anything?</li> <li>• Are there any other documents / phrases / statements you are aware of?</li> </ul>	
<p>Open question to collect any areas of interest to participant and provide opportunities for snowball sample</p>	<p>Q8: Anything else you would like to share about what we have been discussing?  Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there someone else that you think it would be useful to talk to?</li> </ul>	

4. Interview transcript – to be shared for participant review / points of accuracy

## Appendix 15 - Participant introduction letter and informed consent form

Faculty of Applied Sciences  
University of Gloucestershire  
Oxstalls Campus,  
Oxstalls Lane,  
Gloucester,  
GL2 9HW

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter regarding my research proposal.

I am a PhD student at the University of Gloucestershire (UoG) working with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC). My research will explore a variety of areas, including the roles that people play in the day to day life of their community, how participants feel about the communities (in which they might live, work, volunteer or provide care), and how GCC is engaging with and involving local people. I would like to invite you to take part in an interview lasting no more than 1 hour, and ask you some questions about these topics. Involvement is voluntary and you will only be included if you provide your permission to take part. The specific areas I would like to talk with you about include:

- People, places and events that may have been significant for you or your community
- Times when communities worked well or came together
- Times when communities have had to deal with difficult situations
- How you feel organisations such as GCC might best work with local people

The starting point will be a number of questions that will be common to all interviews, but I hope that the majority of our time would be quite open and led by those things that are important to you. In the interview there are no right or wrong answers, as the aim is to listen and understand your opinion, experiences and perspectives. Some things may seem obvious, because they are what you know and experience first-hand, but please do share any thoughts, feelings or memories no matter how small. Our lived experiences can help in understanding the issues that local communities face.

My research is overseen by a steering group that includes representatives from UoG and GCC, and the interview will be recorded to aid analysis. All information provided will be held in confidence and stored in a secure location. I shall anonymise your data so that only I know that your transcript is yours. I will provide you with a copy of the transcript of our interview for you to check for accuracy, and a summary of the research findings when the study is complete. We will keep data for five years after the study has finished, after which the data will be destroyed. Once we have finished the study we would intend to present the results at conferences and in published journals. When we publish the results, because of the anonymisation of the data, no participant will be identifiable. There are no known risks associated with taking part in this study.

By taking part, you can help GCC and other organisations to shape future practice. If you would like to participate, please read the informed consent form in advance of the interview. I will bring a copy for you to sign on the day. Our meeting should last no more than 1.5 hours, including interview time.



**Appendix 15 – Cont'd**

Once again, thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks

James Childs-Evans  
PhD Researcher,  
University of Gloucestershire.

Appendix 15 – Cont’d

Informed Consent Form

Project: <u>An exploration of the processes involved in the development of resilient and empowered communities in Gloucestershire during a period of austerity.</u>		
Lead researcher: James Childs-Evans		
Do you understand that we have asked you to participate in a research study?	YES	NO
Have you read and received a copy of the attached information letter?	YES	NO
Do you understand that you are free contact the research team to take the opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	YES	NO
Do you understand that you free to refuse participation, or to withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence, and that your information will be withdrawn at your request?	YES	NO
Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study?	YES	NO
Do you understand that we will keep your data confidential? Do you understand who will have access to your information?	YES	NO
Do you understand that the interview will be recorded for the purposes of data analysis but your comments will be anonymised in any output resulting from this research?	YES	NO

**I am happy with the explanation above regarding my participation and I wish to take part in this study:**

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 16 - Researcher reflections (italics) and initial summary post interview

**(Participants initially assigned a unique identifier)**

### **Participant 12 (P12) Spring 2016**

P12 is in their 20s and has held a variety of roles, paid and unpaid. For example, working in housing support, as a special constable, and as a town councillor. They are keen to learn new skills - for example psychotherapy, hypnotherapy – in addition to their postgraduate studies. P12 says this creativity around options and learning provides them with a sense of being in control of their own destiny.

Over time P12 describes a personal transition in outlook, from feeling early in their career that they had to have it 'all together', be in control, competent and creating a strict separation between the person doing the job and their private life. They have also moved between 'hands on' roles and management as their career has progressed and are currently moving back into more 'hands on' roles whilst completing postgraduate study. They feel this makes more of a difference - that you can directly see the impact being made.

P12 talks of there being 'general' community - a kind of place we all have a right to be a part of - but that things / life events can take us away from that. Things happen, can isolate or separate us from this and they believe a key part of recovery is about finding ways to link back into it.

*This belief (in part) could stem from their personal life where their mother had to flee domestic violence, moving them from one part of the country to another. In addition, the move resulted in a change of lifestyle - from what was described as a middle-class estate to a council estate.*

P12 has strong feelings of social justice, perhaps also influenced by the change in lifestyle but also by his mother. P12 recalled a significant childhood moment from school '...It's one of those memories that really sticks with me...' where a child was teased at school for wearing the wrong clothes. Something that P12 realises was probably due to the child coming from a difficult and/or poor background. They recall their mother being very angry that P12 had been a part of the teasing, reminding them that people should not make fun of others who don't have the same things / money that others have or are different. These circumstances might have been because of reasons that were nothing to do with them, it is not their fault and they should not have been ridiculed. The childhood memory and discussion were very vivid for P12. *This perhaps linked to their outlook, passion and commitments to awareness of difference, justice, society and class – that we should look out for those on fringe and focus on our commonalities?*

Feelings of social justice and the nature society played into his education where sociology became an interest. However, P12 couldn't quite see how this would link to the world of work – i.e. 'What does a sociologist do?'. Given the many contested concepts and 'fuzziness' of definitions within this area of academic study - how more difficult then to find a career that is clear, credible and easy to understand what you are doing, why, the impacts etc? However, for P12 Community Development (CD) work was the practical

## Appendix 16 – Cont'd

application of learning more about society. To that end P12 studied Community Development at Undergraduate level and is very aware of theories and concepts.

For example, they talk of Asset Based Community Development 'ABCD' – but feels that approach is possibly being professionalised too much. i.e. there is a 'right' way to do it and rules you must follow. There are limited options for creativity in its use. *Potentially becoming just another thing or form for people to fill in to demonstrate what they are doing is the right thing. Perhaps this is what*

*'matters' – to those commissioning or in positions of power - assurance and control, and going through the motions, ticking the boxes is what it is 'like' to work in CD these days?*

P12 feels this also has implications for how any CD type roles are accepted (or not) by the people they work with and relate to. P12 is not sure whether they should (or could) be accepted in an authentic way.

Alongside learning about society P12 was also interested in being a policeman from an early age – a relative was in the force. Whilst there were elements of excitement, fast cars and having a uniform (*and perhaps linking to the need to be in control?*) *this might also be linked to fleeing from the bad domestic situation and a desire to right wrongs for others? Perhaps P12 saw there were lots of dealings with police and other agencies over the years before their mothers' decision to finally flee that situation?*

However, many years later having joined the police as a special constable, an incident '...sat heavily...' with him. This was where a policeman responded to a call for a domestic situation – rolling their eyes and having quite a negative response. Whilst this may have been common and a depressing / run of the mill activity for the policeman, the attitude really affected P12 '...it kind of set the whole tone really...'.

P12 saw that life events, became incidents and incidents became part of the police processes. Crimes became a number – i.e. the professionalisation of activity not reflecting the human aspects and history on the ground. *At the same time this could link to comments about being a professional i.e. Do we play a part in creating a persona that can be easily measured and monitored because that what the system as such values?*

*Perhaps there was a sense that the outcome from their childhood was also not dealt with very well – perhaps P12 was upset that the policeman had no idea of the pain and trauma that might lie behind those events – i.e. in a similar way that P12's mother explained about the child at school who was being ridiculed. Either way this moment meant that P12 did not stay with the role and left, which shows how little things, communication styles etc. can have a big impact - even not if intended. There are assumptions that we can make about situations (even if we've experienced them a lot) – but have we really understood the essence of the experience for others – have we become immune to seeing / hearing it again anew? Is there a degree of bracketing that needs to take place in these instances? I wonder what the reasons were P12 gave to the police force for leaving – do we complain or offer constructive feedback to those in positions of authority / trust?*

When P12 talks about community it is often linked to geography – they have rented property in different places but feels comfortable now is on the property ladder. P12 lives in an area that is not flashy, but also not a council estate.

## Appendix 16 – Cont'd

*Perhaps that comfort comes from being an owner of property, having a legitimate stake in the area – or just finding their own level within the structure of society perhaps? P12 has a child, which has been a surprise in the ways it provided links into community. They have met people that probably would not have spoken to normally. Children have been common link which can break down are assumptions – offering a shared point of reference in the community perhaps? P12 notes that a lot of talk around children is about what you lose, but not necessarily about what you gain. Do we not like to be proud of what we have – or is it that we feel embarrassed to be content, happy etc.?*

P12 is very active in local politics and became a town councillor (without even having been met or interviewed etc!) in their local area. *Which shows how easy it can be to get involved in certain ways? Added to the feelings of property ownership and legitimacy within the community, perhaps this was also a focus for giving something back too? That said, being a town councillor was not what they expected it to be. Maybe more though needs to be given to managing expectations or properly exploring assumptions over what we think things are like, and how they actually are? Are any other activities required or things that could help with the transition? – i.e. accurate Job Descriptions? Also, P12 was a lot younger than other councillors and there were many vested interests P12 perceived. The most enjoyable aspect for P12 or where they felt had provided most impact was in a decision needing to be made where the answer was not clear. Good engagement, good local debate and then an informed decision could be made. This was what P12 felt their role should be.*

In their current work with people P12 understands how hard it is for those with complex or chaotic lives to fit in or find ways to link into community. Often, they live in geographies where there aren't many constructive options for them to go to and socialise / get involved. P12 says they are not often the 'nice people' of society – '...certain things they did in terms of offending that made it difficult for them to interact with the community. Just to have their own energy to partake in the community was really hard because of the impact of things like drugs so that was always quite a struggle'. *Do we value or understand neediness / weakness / addiction / old age / those with caring or support responsibilities – whether formal / informal. Do we assume that there is always blame / fault to be laid – problems and solutions? Who is 'really' deserving or not of our time? (e.g. disabled – mental / physical needs). Perhaps possibly an indictment of our culture? P12 talks to practical impacts of service changes they've witnessed over the years. E.g. in terms of longer 999 response times and the fear that can generate when having to deal with aggressive and challenging individuals. Changes have meant that the police, CD workers and people in general have less opportunities to meet each other. These opportunities cannot be measured as such, therefore are possibly less valued, resulting in lower social capital perhaps? Having the time to build relationships etc. could break down barriers between people? P12 feels the end result of this is having less skilled people needing to do more.*

## Participant 14 (P14) Spring 2016

P14 was born in Africa and came to England to study. They have been very conscious of assumptions and perceptions people have. For example, they must come from a wealthy family to have come to England. There are certain jobs they can or cannot do – they wanted to be a landscape gardener, but was told that it wouldn't be for them. They trained

## Appendix 16 – Cont'd

as an accountant and was told there weren't many people like them in those kinds of firms. When they worked in a factory in a large city, there was a canteen for smoking and non-smoking split along racial lines, regardless of whether you smoked or not.

They talk of their life being a 'social experiment' *which may link to the perceptions / questions / assumptions of others about them? An experiment suggests an answer is required – are they doing something novel / unusual perhaps? Is an experiment required, as some kind of test will help to see whether they are ok or justified in being here, living the life that they do? Is not normal to be doing the things they want to do. What would be the results of the experiment?* P14 notes that coming to England was the first time that they had experienced limitations over their future. *This may contradict with the Theresa May speech of a shared society and this country as being the great meritocracy perhaps?*

P14 moved out of a large city to get some 'space'. *P14 references 'space' a lot in talking about things and their role / interactions. May link to having to move a lot, between and within countries? Found the big city emotionally fulfilling but mentally tiring. This also links to other participant comments as well.*

When arriving in locally P14 had a positive experience at University, and got involved in the charity sector and other action groups. There were specific individuals saw things / qualities in them that P14 couldn't see. P14 was appointed to positions even though they didn't feel that they had the qualifications or experience. P14 thinks that they could see the bigger picture – and have applied that approach in their own life when looking out for or supporting others less fortunate than them in the years that followed – i.e. P14 talks of 'do they want it'? *Is there something 'special' in there? However later in the interview P14 comments about individuals being very different and/or hard to define classify.*

P14 is understandably very conscious of labels and notes that there are communities rather than community. They feel these descriptions are often lazy attempts to define or make sense of things. They explain you can come from different countries, or be poor and black, affluent and black etc. *Do we realise where we are being lazy with our descriptions and their potential impacts?*

P14 also works with specific community in a south west city and sometimes there is the sense or perception that they are not authentic / or a contradiction of sorts (from those P14 is working with). This P14 thinks is because they don't live with them and has a different life elsewhere. *Perhaps this also links to comments over being in a social experiment? Defines their situation as 'multi-class' even though very clear about specific class issues for others – do we naturally see ourselves as special / different perhaps?*

Although from their background and experiences they can relate in some ways others cannot – they have no experience of being stopped and searched to the extent of young black men – no experience of educational inequality and lack of opportunity, as they had happy upbringing in Africa. Suggests that for those who do face these things, it creates a perception of them being less intelligent. They have a 'battle' to face in order to make headway in life. (Note DFES report on education and skills).

P14 had always imagined that they would go back to Africa to do a development role / job at some point. They were in fact offered a 'dream position' but could not accept it as

## Appendix 16 – Cont'd

realised was so settled in the UK. This was a bit of a shock for them as they'd always felt that they'd been in transit. *Also links to comments over space and moving perhaps?* When got home to Gloucester and walked through the door, realised they was 'home'. Place is important. Feels settled but at the same time feels that has an African identity which is different to their life in the UK. *Managing complexity in personality, even before considering roles / functions etc. Do we give time to considering that and how we might relate to others?*

P14 is big on making connections and listening to others / trying to get policy makers funders to imagine what it's like to be the people they are commissioning services for. Tries to make it clear for others that this will be hard and not easy. *Managing expectations of a different kind?* For example, for certain communities the person in front of you may be seen as the reason for all your problems / inequalities – *so informally represent much more than a current role / job title / formal function. Power relations perhaps?*

P14 believes that the solutions are often there and the most ingenious answers are to be found in that difficult setting, if one can just take the time to do so. Gives example of young filmmaker that 'wouldn't have fitted into the system or model and no one would have listened to [them]'... as with P14's own experience, the individual asked why P14 had believed in them – what did they see in them? P14 explained the person was optimistic, had ideas, kept coming back and they made that judgement based on experience. The film maker just needed a little bit of help (*a nudge perhaps?*) to go all the way. P14 also feels there is an assumption that communities know what to do, that applying labels like ABCD will make sense. *But if those involved in the system struggle to define and measure, how much harder will it be for others outside of that 'bubble'?*

P14 explains that helping people understand and learning together takes time. Time to get to know people and to be known and accepted in return (*building social capital within organisations and communities – not just in communities perhaps? Not just a concept for others, something for all?*).

P14 is conscious that they are often asked to be somewhere because they are a 'black face' and represents something for the tick box exercises. Therefore, they have to be selective about where they attend or look to connect others up (*diffusing power perhaps?*) with more appropriate skills. There are times when you need to listen and learn, times when you need to act.

An important time for them was when an organisation they worked for lost its funding (5 years ago). They had to re-evaluate why they were doing the role and what their motivations were. Was it just for a salary or was it more than that? Recognised that they had lost connection with 'real' people – was attending meetings with the same people around the same table, with same decisions being made, using the same language and interventions (*a negative type of community / social capital or not?*). P14 explains 'The reason for doing this work was around friends, social justice, contributing to and changing the world. When I had answered that question, I think I was comfortable to continue. I think you always have to be honest with people, as well as understand yourself.'

Thinks in the same way for policy makers they need to talk about 'system and process, unconscious bias, looking at how decisions are made, how did we come to this?'

Appendix 17 – Example Interview Annotation

Appearance of role / identity

Even he was saying 'well lots of people don't enjoy their work' and I thought that's true actually, and isn't that a real shame? Because again, especially for males, work is such a big part of their identity, you know the classic... men retire from work and pretty soon afterwards they deteriorate and die. It is a scary thing because actually it is all tied in with your self-identity. For me coming into work - just doing this - I am really lucky to do it.

What are the links with identity?

Reality Family Role Life choices and jobs How to make sacrifices / compromises?

JC In terms of it being an honour, can you explain a bit more about that?

Well, I think the whole work here is good and I am lucky that I can do it and I am in a position where, I mean I don't have kids, I can afford to work 20 hours per week and just do what I am doing. Because when we look at the way the time banking is now compared with what it was, we are a big part of how we have shaped that ...it comes down to us on the ground doing the work. You know, you go with your interests and the direction you want to go in based on who you are working with, and that flexibility to pretty much do anything you want. That is still achieving something, you know, it is really good.

Repetition of lucky - not something that everyone experiences? confidence / Skills.

Who defines what we measure / the work - control power?

JC The examples of community things, being an honour and a pleasure to be involved in, what springs to mind?

For me sometimes it is the really tiny little things and the classic stuff I always give is, and this was quite early on when I started as well actually again that was one of the things that really cemented that this is the kind of work I should be doing, was a lady called up and asked if we had someone who could change a light bulb, and it was a really easy thing for me to sort out, it took next to no time, somebody went over there and just changed the light bulb. But from her point of view it was something she couldn't do, and she had nobody else to ask, and I thought to myself a couple of years ago I was doing all this stupid complicated maths, sitting in front of a computer and I am not sure I achieved anything that much, but after one phone call I have done something

Use of 'classic' / History Little things matter

So not sure if right thing for a while confidence? why?

Need a personal sense of achievement.

Perception of self / education

Little things matter.

16

Appendix 17 Cont'd

do you think they saw in you?

Leadership, and the fact I probably had good communication skills. When I was a Psychiatric Nurse they train you in how to deal with people. You acquire skills and confidence through experience too. Being able to communicate, and trying to be able to see things from both sides. In my early days, I was more emotive - 'Oh you can't do this, you can't do that'.....Having been in it for some time now, you see both sides. Having been to many neighbour disputes, when they come to you, you think there is another side to the story. I'd better check first rather than taking it and running with it.

Skills  
Confidence  
(faith)  
Need to spend proper time to see both sides (relationship)

approaches to work?

JC So, learning not to rush in?

Definitely. When I was first a community activist, I was like 'Oh, you can't do that', banging the table. I think I have probably mellowed a bit.

perception of role/self over time

JC Do you feel like you get more done now?

Definitely. Yes, it's about building rapport with County and District Councillors. I know them on first name terms and have worked with them in a variety of roles over the years. That's how you treat people, being respectful of your position. It's much the same here. Some members do throw their status at people a bit. That can be quite intimidating to people....'I'm a councillor, you've got to do this'...or will send email emails. The email system has allowed that to happen. It has happened to me in the other way - I can receive intimidating emails from members of the community who would never say things like that to your face. It's easier that way. Because you are so readily available, you are more accessible.

Skills  
relationships  
Skills - respect  
Perhaps why people nervous  
Skills - email

Speed of accessibility / time

bits of references to getting things done / can't do that / got to do that -> not very participative.

Recognition of time  
Career history  
early days important  
- don't understand black/white

Communication  
and impacts  
email / impacts?  
depressant?

Appendix 18 - Participant Summary and Interview Question Responses Excerpt

	AGE	GENDER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	30-50	M	Does education prepare you for the future?	Lots of options but no long term plans	Simple things are important / changing lifestyle / quality of life v quantity of income	Being a team does not mean you are together if everyone is an expert - what is the shared aspect?	Early days are important after significant events / choices - moving home / changing job	Need to be careful not to generalise even about minority groups - still very complicated	Much can be hidden and not verbalised - particularly if we are perceived as representative for others / a group
2	<30	F	Each organisation has own culture even if branch of main	Unware of options available - careers advice	Feelings of ignorance leading to action	Perceived as someone wasting time when young - why are you doing this? Implications for young carers and prevention in the longer term	Not really thought about why so involved in various volunteer activities	Belonging important for community and implications for increased social mobility - good and bad sides	Looking to those with less secure jobs personally to deliver security for community?
3	>50	F	Chain of prior events to getting involved	Being seen to get things done - building a reputation	Perception of elected members / frontline / - are there 'sides' rather than teams - yet very general about community even though know how complex organisations are - deals to be done etc.	Housing / roads an issue	Early days and skills required - level of emotion / experience and emotional experience!	Parental influence v thinking for self and why? Role models and decision making	Education and opportunity as a woman
4	30-50	M	Skills / Loyalty / Leadership issues - killing a thriving church / Perception of liaison officers at GCC / pushing communities agenda for MTC / Chief Execs	Involvement as a young person - helping in youth work / church	Job not as described / what you'd like to do or end up doing (repairs etc.)	living in a place / authentic connections	Fund raising / having to 'sell' yourself - impact on identity	Working at the frontline v cherry picking by organisations	Importance of place / buildings / facilities / 'being a local' / history and reputation / security
5	<30	M	Lack of justice - let down by the state	Strong family history of local / political involvement	Changing as a person - what you can realistically achieve or fix	Publicly visible - yet needing privacy	Early days council conflicts and scandal	Life experience (working in business / being clinical / being frontline) v personal education and ambition	Little things big impact - getting involved with youth club

Appendix 19 - Summaries of early cross-case themes and interview question responses - April 2016

<b>Early Review of Themes</b>	<b>Theme linkages</b>	<b>Conceptual Detail</b>	<b>Emerging Conceptual Themes</b>
Acceptance / validation by others	Identity?	The extent of honesty / vulnerability / empathy	<b>Relationships and being known</b>
Being heard / understood / accepted / tolerant		The extent of assumptions / judgements	
Influencing others	Power?	Being a representative	
Validation / acceptance / recognition - pride in the community	Relationships?	Being a member	
Being heard	Identity?	Having some influence over the messages	<b>The Power of Power</b>
Getting things done (visibly)	Power?	Being flexible with the outcomes	
Being seen to act justly and receive justice	Relationships?	Listening in engagement, learning through participation	
Connections between people and the system	Relationships?	No time to properly think / reflect	<b>Problematizing Community Development</b>
Complexity of the system		Lack of opportunities	
Complexity of people	Power?	Disempowering definitions / discourse	
Being credible	Problems?	Who am I working for?	<b>The role of identity</b>
Credibility / justice	Identity?	Why do I do what I do?	
Being balanced / credible		How do I make a difference?	
Being able to influence	Power?	How to take opportunities?	
Being credible and validation		What is the best use of my time?	

## Appendix 20 - Tabulated organisation of themes. Original NVIVO node list and grouping

Interview NODES 1st Group

Node Name	Sources	References
1 Places and Projects	18	171
2 Getting Involved	18	78
3 Qualifications and Training	18	64
4 Definition of Community	18	45
5 Schooling	18	39
6 Finance	17	118
7 Consequences	17	69
8 Faith Trust Belief	17	63
9 Definition of Resilience	17	22
10 Thinking about why or conceptually	16	75
11 Discussion of Feelings	16	73
12 Influential People	16	48
13 Definition of Empowerment	16	19
14 Process of Empowerment	15	54
15 Little things - Big Impact	15	45
16 Reorganisation and Impact	15	39
17 Attitudes towards involvement	14	28
18 Definition of Austerity	14	18
19 Process of Resilience	13	49
20 Boundary Spanning	13	46
21 Engagement	12	33
22 Childhood Experience	12	29
23 Importance / passage of time: Slow	11	23
24 Being Hands On	9	21
25 LEO Role	9	19
26 Progress and Promotion	9	16
27 Importance / passage of time: Quick	8	15

Interview NODES 2nd Group

Node Name	Sources	References	Total
1 Places and Projects	18	171	171
2 Getting Involved	18	78	
2 Being Hands On	9	21	
2 Attitudes towards involvement	14	28	
2 Engagement	12	33	160
3 Qualifications and Training	18	64	
3 Progress and Promotion	9	16	80
5 Schooling	18	39	
5 Childhood Experience	12	29	68
4 Definition of Community	18	45	45
6 Finance	17	118	118
7 Consequences	17	69	
7 Little things - Big Impact	15	45	
7 Reorganisation and Impact	15	39	153
8 Faith Trust Belief	17	63	63
9 Definition of Resilience	17	22	
9 Process of Resilience	13	49	71
10 Thinking about why or conceptually	16	75	
10 Discussion of Feelings	16	73	148
11 Influential People	16	48	48
12 Definition of Empowerment	16	19	
12 Process of Empowerment	15	54	73
13 Definition of Austerity	14	18	18
14 Boundary Spanning	13	46	46
15 LEO Role	9	19	19
16 Importance / passage of time: Quick	8	15	
16 Importance / passage of time: Slow	11	23	38

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**Interview NODES 2nd Group: Regrouped and linked to emerging themes / cross case themes  
(Ranked by frequency / numeration)**

Node Name	Example statement / Link to literature review theme ( <i>italics</i> )	Total	Emerging Cross Case Themes
<p><b>1</b> Places and Projects</p>	<p>1. Place or a sense of 'home' is important (<i>Motivation</i>)                      2. Challenge of delivering holistic or integrated services, and describing the outcomes for funders is difficult – are we measuring the right things and is there the time to get an answer – particularly where issues are long term and generational? (<i>Evaluation</i>)</p>	<b>171</b>	<p>IDENTITY  PROBLEMS</p>
<p><b>2</b> Getting Involved  Being Hands On  Attitudes towards involvement  Engagement</p>	<p>Limited recognition of the local / informal aspects of support / commitment that participants provide to community and assets already in place (<i>Carers / Volunteering / Befriending / Evaluation</i>)                      1. 'Professionals' don't feel hands on enough (or credible?), yet those in 'hands on' positions don't always feel listened to – what is driving this / who is the target audience? (<i>Motivation</i>)                      2. There is a time when being hands on is enough and need to move on, having to start again (<i>Resilience</i>)                      Community development can be a selfish activity – in a good and bad way (<i>Networks / Behaviour</i>)                      Being 'done to' not 'done with' remains a theme, not being in control (<i>Empowerment</i>)</p>	<b>160</b>	<p>POWER  BEING KNOWN  IDENTITY  POWER</p>
<p><b>3</b> Consequences  Little things - Big Impact  Reorganisation and Impact</p>	<p>Individuals versus policy for delivery at scale – sense that certain orgs / individuals are preferred (<i>Models / Case studies</i>)                      1. Understanding and recognising little things can make a big difference / yet often taken for granted – how to recognise the everyday / 'ordinary' and measure success? (<i>Evaluation</i>)                      2. Use of language e.g. 'professionals', 'stepping up', 'capacity' divorced from lived experience (<i>Empowerment / Resilience / Behaviour</i>)                      3. Vagueness of corporate language and definitions – who / which community(ies) are we talking about? (<i>Empowerment / Engagement / Participation</i>)                      1. '7 day' services or stepping up are not new for those volunteering / caring (<i>Carers</i>)                      2. Commissioning can assume change is required, new is always good (<i>Engagement / Participation / Evaluation / Models / Case Studies</i>)</p>	<b>153</b>	<p>BEING KNOWN  PROBLEMS  POWER  PROBLEMS</p>

Appendix 20 - Cont'd – Tabulated organisation of themes

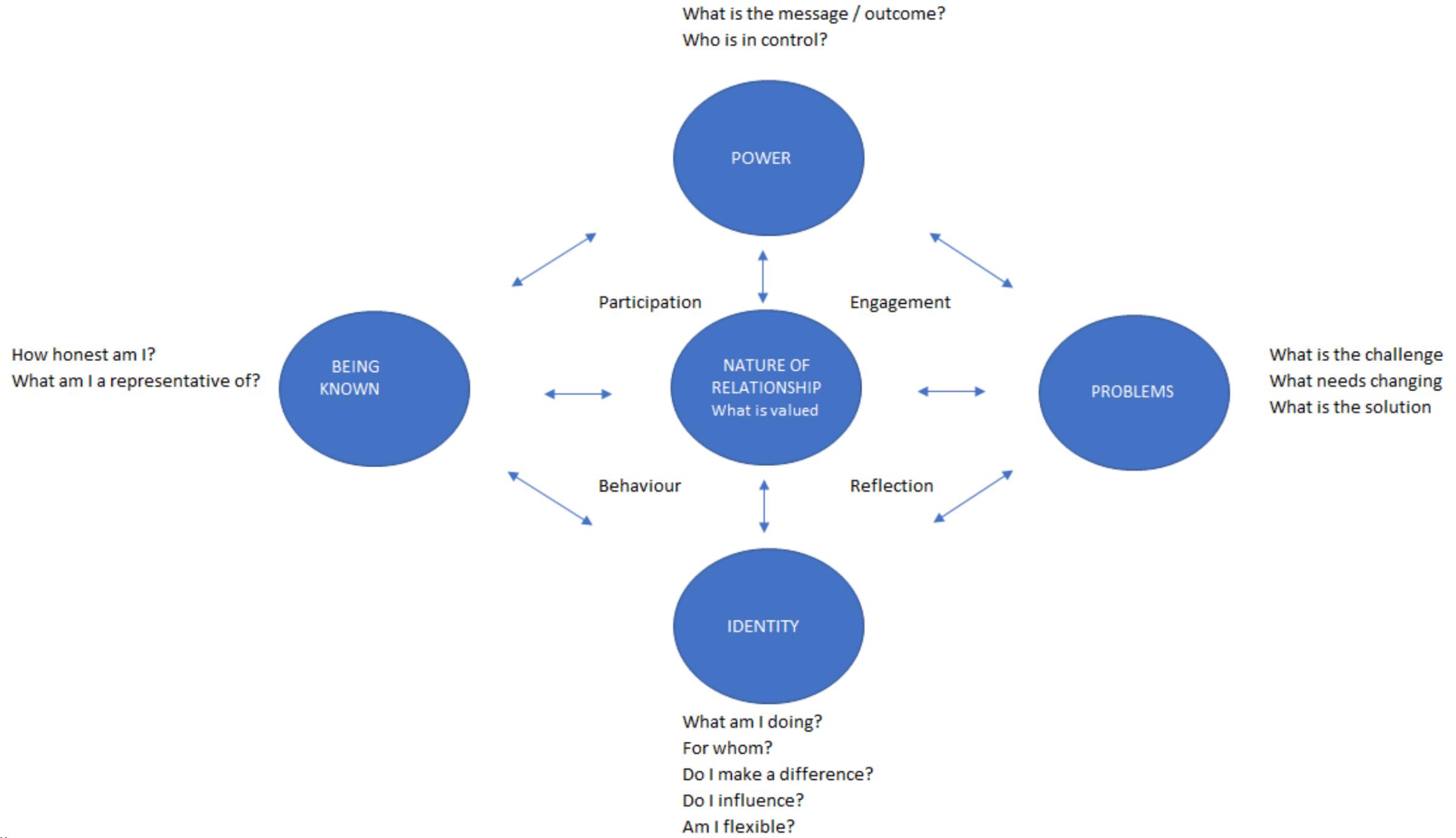
**Interview NODES 2nd Group: Regrouped and linked to emerging themes / cross case themes  
(Ranked by frequency / numeration)**

<b>Node Name</b>	<b>Example statement / Link to literature review theme (<i>italics</i>)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Emerging Cross Case Themes</b>
<b>4</b> Thinking about why or conceptually Discussion of Feelings	Little space for personal reflection on own story and future – ( <i>Empowerment / Resilience</i> ) 1. Fears – of change / coping / commissioners taking ideas or losing funding / councillors / advocates ( <i>Motivation / Behaviour</i> ) 2. Structural inequalities still feel very real to some participants ( <i>Empowerment / Resilience</i> )	<b>148</b>	IDENTITY BEING KNOWN POWER
<b>5</b> Finance	Austerity is not new, struggles to make ends meet or access funding / resources has been restricted for many decades ( <i>Resilience</i> )	<b>118</b>	PROBLEMS
<b>6</b> Qualifications and Training Progress and Promotion	Chains of relationships / events / experiences can build skills not just qualifications ( <i>Empowerment / Networks / Evaluation</i> ) Accessibility / Listening – important personal attributes ( <i>Empowerment / Resilience / Behaviour</i> )	<b>80</b>	BEING KNOWN IDENTITY
<b>7</b> Definition of Empowerment Process of Empowerment			
<b>8</b> Definition of Resilience Process of Resilience			
<b>9</b> Schooling Childhood Experience	Relevance and preparation of education system to choices / decisions when working in Community Development. Are they qualified / 'professional' / credible? ( <i>Empowerment / Evaluation</i> )	<b>68</b>	IDENTITY POWER
<b>10</b> Faith Trust Belief	1. Myths, storytelling, assumptions – Significant events, organisations, attitudes, approach to / relationships / commissioning / tendering / fundraising / monitoring / reporting / job descriptions ( <i>Behaviour</i> ) 2. Language of faith / belief – in people, that things will be ok, the future is secure	<b>63</b>	BEING KNOWN IDENTITY

Appendix 20 - Cont'd – Tabulated organisation of themes

**Interview NODES 2nd Group: Regrouped and linked to emerging themes / cross case themes  
(Ranked by frequency / numeration)**

Node Name		Example statement / Link to literature review theme ( <i>italics</i> )	Total	Emerging Cross Case Themes
11	Influential People	Personal and formative influences / people and significant events – how that influences the present and whether people wish to get involved or walk away. Individuals matter ( <i>Volunteering / Motivation / Behaviour</i> )	48	IDENTITY POWER
12	Boundary Spanning	How do they make sense of the interplay / complexity of community facing roles?...Not something routinely shared / possibly fear of looking foolish, being too personal. Remains contradictory and conflicting ( <i>Motivation / Behaviour</i> )	46	IDENTITY
13	Definition of Community	Balance of three 'R's for participants when discussing community – 'Role(s)' how they describe community in the context of what they do, 'Romantic' what they think it should be like, and 'Reality' how it feels on the ground – its complex ( <i>Boundary Spanning</i> )	45	IDENTITY BEING KNOWN
14	Importance / passage of time: Quick  Importance / passage of time: Slow	1. How you are disadvantaged / accepted can be rapid. Judgements and assumptions. ( <i>Behaviour</i> ) 2. Sensitivity to timing and confidence to make quick decisions – early on in an event / job / change appears significant ( <i>Empowerment / Behaviour</i> ) Responsiveness of state – e.g. too slow - complaints or too fast – commissioning ( <i>Empowerment / Participation / Engagement</i> )	38	BEING KNOWN POWER PROBLEMS
15	LEO Role	Low visibility / relevance of GCC and GCC LEOs, comms approaches and content. Challenge to use the resource effectively and what agenda they have ( <i>Engagement / Participation</i> )	19	PROBLEMS
16	Definition of Austerity		18	



...



## Appendix 22 - Direct definitions of community, empowerment and resilience within the 23 texts

Name	Date	Source	Definition of Community	Definition of Empowerment	Definition of Resilience
1 David Cameron - Big Society	Jul-10	Cabinet Office	Local, of the people for the people	taking control / provision of information. I call it the Big Society.	
2 Decentralisation and the Localism Bill: an essential guide	Dec-10	DCLG		Government must commit to the active empowerment of local communities, not merely cease to disempower them. Decades of disempowering government have suppressed initiative, undermined incentives and multiplied the excuses for not getting involved (or for saying 'no' to those who do)	
3 A plain English guide to the Localism Act	Nov-11	DCLG			
4 Building Safe Active Communities - Third Report	Feb-12	DCLG			
5 Ed Milliband - One Nation Labour	Jan-13	Fabian Society			
6 The Five Year Forward View	Oct-14	NHSE			
7 The Implications of Devolution for England	Dec-14	Cabinet Office			
8 Whose Society? - The Final Big Society Audit	Jan-15	Civil Exchange		Community empowerment described by the Government as 'local people taking control of how things are done in their area and being helped to do so by local government and others'	
9 A guide to community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing	Feb-15	PHE / NHE	an umbrella term, to cover groups of people sharing a common characteristic or affinity, such as living in a neighbourhood, or being in a specific population group, or sharing a common faith or set of experiences	Individual empowerment is about individuals gaining a sense of control over their lives and health. Community empowerment is about people working collectively to shape the decisions that influence their lives and health. Ultimately it involves changes in power relations, leading to a more equitable society	Resilience is an important concept at individual and community levels, linked to an evidence base on social factors that protect and maintain health in adversity
10 The places we live in Gloucestershire	Apr-15	Barnwood Trust	...there was no single, defining characteristic of a good area or community but that a range of factors combined to make somewhere a 'good place to live'		
11 Joint Enabling Active Communities Policy	Jul-15	GCC	a group of people with a common interest or identity or who share a common place.		
12 Community Capital: The Value of Connected Communities	Oct-15	RSA		the act of increasing the amount of power available to individuals or groups. But defining what this 'power' being conferred actually is, and how it is shared, is a rather more complex task. A full conception of empowerment therefore demands engagement with both the internal and external dimensions of human activity.	resilient communities will be ones that find effective ways to share the load so as not to lead to 'burn-out' among such community leaders
13 Making a difference in rural communities throughout England 2014/15	Dec-15	ACRE			Communities undertaking a range of planning processes. These contribute to greater community resilience, for example increasing local capacity to manage emergency situations e.g. flooding.
14 Delivering the Forward View: NHS planning guidance 2016/17 – 2020/21	Dec-15	NHSE			
15 MTC2 Strategy Update 2016/17	Jan-16	GCC			
16 Joint review of partnerships and investment in voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in the health and care sector	May-16	DH / NHSE / PHE			Goals such as wellbeing, strong communities and resilience cannot be easily procured: they require collaborative planning and commissioning
17 One Gloucestershire - Transforming Care, Transforming Communities	Autumn 2016	GCCG on behalf of 'Gloucestershire System'			Improved system resilience through a more integrated approach, leading to improved quality of care and support for staff
18 New approaches to value in health and care	Sep-16	Realising the value consortium			
19 Kinder Communities: The power of everyday relationships	Oct-16	Carnegie / JRF		Evidence indicates that strong connections, interactions and relationships between individuals in the community are pre-requisites for community empowerment.	Resilience, defined as the ability of individuals, places and populations to withstand stress and challenge. Key characteristics of resilient individuals as: having at least one strong emotional attachment; access to wider support; positive community experiences and disposition.
20 Adult social care funding: 2016 state of the nation report	Nov-16	Local Government Association			
21 The Casey Review - A review into opportunity and integration	Dec-16	DCLG			
22 IIT Community Connectors Tender	Dec-16	GCC / GCCG			
23 Theresa May - Shared Society	Jan-17	Prime Ministers Office			

Appendix 23 - Excerpt of texts selected for Discourse Analysis in chronological order, key quotes and identified themes

Name	Date	Source	Relevant Themes re Communities /	Key Quotes	Problems	Power	Relationships	Identity
1 David Cameron - Big Society	Jul-10	Cabinet Office	Culture change Feeling free and powerful to help yourself and 'Vanguard' communities being training ground of change	<i>For years, there was the basic assumption at the heart of government that the way to improve things in society was to micromanage from the centre, from Westminster. But this just doesn't work.</i>	x			
2 Decentralisation and the Localism Bill: an essential guide	Dec-10	DCLG	From Big Government to Big Society Lift the burden of bureaucracy Empower communities to do things their way Increase local control of public finance Diversify the supply of public services Open up government to public scrutiny Strengthen accountability to local people	<i>Radical decentralisation means stripping away much of the top-down bureaucracy that previous governments have put in the way of frontline public services and civil society. It means giving local people the powers and funding to deliver what they want for their communities – with a particular determination to help those who need it most. And it means doing what previous governments have not dared: reforming the excessively centralised tax system which stifles local autonomy and innovation. The power shift we want will not happen overnight. We will face opposition from those with a vested interest in the status quo. But we know that dispersing power is the way to improve our public services and get the better schools and safer hospitals we want.</i>		x		
3 A plain English guide to the Localism Act	Nov-11	DCLG	Power shift from Government to Communities Big Society	<i>We think that the best means of strengthening society is not for central government to try and seize all the power and responsibility for itself. It is to help people and their locally elected representatives to achieve their own ambitions. This is the essence of the Big Society.</i>		x		
4 Report	Feb-12	DCLG	Building the Big Society Tackling problem drinking A 'hub' for community activists - two clicks to Getting public servants out into the	<i>Like Helen [Baroness Newman - Communities Champion], we strongly believe that by backing citizens and communities across the country, we can continue to grow a bigger, more active, safer society.</i>				x
5 Ed Milliband - One Nation Labour	Jan-13	Fabian Society	One nation Labour Confident communities Community organising to build relationships	<i>Turning this spirit of collective endeavour, of looking out for each other, from something we do in our daily lives, to the way our nation is run. That is what One Nation Labour is about. Taking the common decency and values of the British people and saying we must make it the way we run the country as well.</i>				x
6 The Five Year Forward View	Oct-14	NHSE	Empowering patients Engaging communities The NHS as a social movement	<i>These changes mean that we need to take a longer view - a Five-Year Forward View – to consider the possible futures on offer, and the choices that we face. So this Forward View sets out how the health service needs to change, arguing for a more engaged relationship</i>			x	
7 The Implications of Devolution for England	Dec-14	Cabinet Office	How powers have been passed to the Transfer of powers from central government Options for further devolution and decentralisation	<i>The Deputy Prime Minister said that "the West Lothian question...clearly needs to be settled" and that "we need a much more radical dispersal of power within England...we must guarantee a new, legal right for local authorities to demand powers".</i>		x		

Appendix 24 - Excerpt of texts selected for Discourse Analysis grouped by themes with key quotes

Name	Date	Source	Relevant Themes re Communities / Empowerment / Resilience	Key Quotes	Problems	Power	Identity	Relationships
1 David Cameron - Big Society	Jul-10	Cabinet Office	Culture change Feeling free and powerful to help yourself and own community 'Vanguard' communities being training ground of change	For years, there was the basic assumption at the heart of government that the way to improve things in society was to micromanage from the centre, from Westminster. But this just doesn't work.	x			
8 Whose Society? - The Final Big Society Audit	Jan-15	Civil Exchange	Big Society Community Empowerment	In fact, successive governments had similar goals and the next is likely to continue to do so after the election. There are compelling reasons: people expect more control, governments can only deliver more with less with the help of wider society, and democracy can only be revitalised by sharing more power. Five years on, what did happen to the Big Society? The conclusion of this report is that, despite some genuinely positive initiatives, the Big Society has failed to deliver against its original goals. Attempts to create more social action, to empower communities and to open up public services, with some positive exceptions, have not worked. The Big Society has not reached those who need it most. We are more divided than before.	x			
14 Delivering the Forward View: NHS planning guidance 2016/17 – 2020/21	Dec-15	NHSE	Place based planning for local communities STPs - engagement with community partners New CCG Assessment Framework Six principles for engagement	The scale of what we need to do in future depends on how well we end the current year. The 2016/17 financial challenge for each trust will be contingent upon its end-of-year financial outturn, and the winter period calls for a relentless focus on maintaining standards in emergency care. It is also the case that local NHS systems will only become sustainable if they accelerate their work on prevention and care redesign. We don't have the luxury of waiting until perfect plans are completed.	x			
15 MTC2 Strategy Update 2016/17	Jan-16	GCC	Relationships with communities Using the resources available for Gloucestershire people and communities Helping communities help themselves Active Communities - build resilience / empower for community action	These are times of unprecedented change for Gloucestershire County Council and our partners. We are facing considerable challenges at the same time as enormous opportunities. The challenges take the form of rising demand for the services we provide to the most vulnerable children, adults and families at the same time as facing continued reductions to our funding. The opportunities are about our relationships – with local people and communities, with our partners and with Central Government.	x			
20 Adult social care funding: 2016 state of the nation report	Nov-16	Local Government Association	Responsibilities / expectations of the individual, family, community and state in supporting older and disabled people. Tension between prioritising statutory duties for greatest needs and investing in services / communities that prevent / reduce future demand Communities / people in them need the whole system from government to local volunteer groups to work together more	Adult social care is an absolutely vital public service that supports some of our most vulnerable people and promotes the wellbeing and independence of many more. For too long the service has too often been seen by decision-makers as an adjunct to the NHS, rather than a service of equal importance. A lack of recognition in terms of profile has combined with a lack of recognition in terms of funding to place our care and support system under enormous pressure. This has been particularly acute since 2010 and although governments of the day have responded with their own well-intentioned solutions, they have failed to properly resolve the gap between available resources on the one hand and cost, demand and pressures on the other.	x			
21 The Casey Review - A review into opportunity and integration	Dec-16	DCLG	Community Cohesion Community Leadership Building of empowerment and resilience to promote integration	But too many leaders have chosen to take the easier path when confronted with these issues in the past – sometimes with good intent – and that has often resulted in problems being ducked, swept under the carpet or allowed to fester.	x			

Appendix 25 - The creation of overarching and subthemes across the four areas, linked to initial analysis with key quotes

Theme 1 - Problems

Ref	Name	Date	Source	Themes re Communities / Empowerment / Resilience	Conceptual Themes	Text Quotes	Ref
15	MTC2 Strategy Update 2016/17	Jan-16	GCC	Relationships with communities Using the resources available for Gloucestershire people and communities Helping communities help themselves Active Communities - build resilience / empower for community action	PROBLEMS	Extent of change <i>These are times of unprecedented change for Gloucestershire County Council and our partners. We are facing considerable challenges at the same time as enormous opportunities. The challenges take the form of rising demand for the services we provide to the most vulnerable children, adults and families at the same time as facing continued reductions to our funding. The opportunities are about our relationships – with local people and communities, with our partners and with Central Government.</i>	15
20	Adult social care funding: 2016 state of the nation report	Nov-16	Local Government Association	Responsibilities / expectations of the individual, family, community and state in supporting older and disabled people. Tension between prioritising statutory duties for greatest needs and investing in services / communities that prevent / reduce future demand Communities / people in them need the whole system from government to local volunteer groups to work together more		Extent of pressure <i>Adult social care is an absolutely vital public service that supports some of our most vulnerable people and promotes the wellbeing and independence of many more. For too long the service has too often been seen by decision-makers as an adjunct to the NHS, rather than a service of equal importance. A lack of recognition in terms of profile has combined with a lack of recognition in terms of funding to place our care and support system under enormous pressure. This has been particularly acute since 2010 and although governments of the day have responded with their own well-intentioned solutions, they have failed to properly resolve the gap between available resources on the one hand and cost, demand and pressures on the other.</i>	20
1	David Cameron - Big Society	Jul-10	Cabinet Office	Culture change Feeling free and powerful to help yourself and own community 'Vanguard' communities being training ground of change		Complexity of process and administration <i>For years, there was the basic assumption at the heart of government that the way to improve things in society was to micromanage from the centre, from Westminster. But this just doesn't work.</i>	1
8	Whose Society? - The Final Big Society Audit	Jan-15	Civil Exchange	Big Society Community Empowerment		Complexity of process and administration <i>So what would a future Government have to do to create a 'good Big Society'? Analysis in this Audit suggests four key ingredients: • Collaboration with civil society • Greater power sharing and devolution • Targeting resources and support on areas of greatest need, in order to increase fairness • More business engagement</i>	8
14	Delivering the Forward View: NHS planning guidance 2016/17 – 2020/21	Dec-15	NHSE	Place based planning for local communities STPs - engagement with community partners New CCG Assessment Framework Six principles for engagement		Complexity of the system <i>The scale of what we need to do in future depends on how well we end the current year. The 2016/17 financial challenge for each trust will be contingent upon its end-of-year financial outturn, and the winter period calls for a relentless focus on maintaining standards in emergency care. It is also the case that local NHS systems will only become sustainable if they accelerate their work on prevention and care redesign. We don't have the luxury of waiting until perfect plans are completed.</i>	14
18	New approaches to value in health and care	Sep-16	Realising the value consortium	Assessing value in health and care, as it is experienced and created by people and communities Being independent Feeling supported Being in control of decisions and of support Feeling connected to others (socially and culturally) Being able to do the things that are important to them		Complexity of people and communities <i>The majority of this value, however, goes unrecognised by formal systems. The Realising the Value programme therefore set out to explore what 'value' means for people and communities, and how this can be understood most appropriately by the NHS.</i>	18
19	Kinder Communities: The power of everyday relationships	Oct-16	Carnegie / JRF	The impact of everyday relationships and kindness on individual and societal wellbeing The impact of everyday relationships and kindness on community empowerment Develop a theory of change with attention on those who experience poverty and disadvantage		Complexity of people and communities <i>Government, in all its guises, can be understandably reluctant to offer solutions in such a personal aspect of our lives. It pulls us, knowingly or otherwise, towards institutional solutions. To solutions focused on ever more paid professional staff and their organisations. The voluntary sector is a much caught up in this 'institution think' as government. But a perceived lack of humanity is impinging on our trust in all these institutions and there are important questions about the role of organisations in reasserting basic values.</i>	19
21	The Casey Review - A review into opportunity and integration	Dec-16	DCLG	Community Cohesion Community Leadership Building of empowerment and resilience to promote integration		Complexity of people and communities <i>But too many leaders have chosen to take the easier path when confronted with these issues in the past – sometimes with good intent – and that has often resulted in problems being ducked, swept under the carpet or allowed to fester.</i>	21
23	Theresa May - Shared Society	Jan-17	Prime Ministers Office	Family, community, citizenship Not just value of individual rights but focus on responsibilities to one another Exclusion from social and political discourse		Complexity of problems <i>Governments have traditionally been good at identifying – if not always addressing – such problems. However, the mission I have laid out for the government – to make Britain a country that works for everyone and not just the privileged few – goes further. It means more than fighting these obvious injustices. It means acknowledging and addressing the everyday injustices that too many people feel too.</i>	23

Appendix 25 – Cont’d – Theme 2 – Power

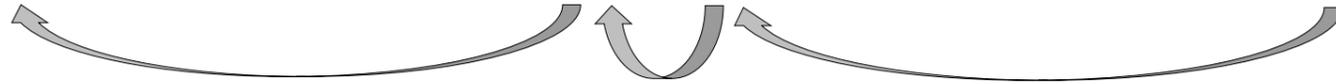
2	Decentralisation and the Localism Bill: an essential guide	Dec-10	DCLG	<p>From Big Government to Big Society Lift the burden of bureaucracy Empower communities to do things their way Increase local control of public finance Diversify the supply of public services Open up government to public scrutiny Strengthen accountability to local people</p>	POWER	Barriers to the dispersal of power	Radical decentralisation means stripping away much of the top-down bureaucracy that previous governments have put in the way of frontline public services and civil society. It means giving local people the powers and funding to deliver what they want for their communities – with a particular determination to help those who need it most. And it means doing what previous governments have not dared: reforming the excessively centralised tax system which stifles local autonomy and innovation. The power shift we want will not happen overnight. We will face opposition from those with a vested interest in the status quo. But we know that dispersing power is the way to improve our public services and get the better schools and safer hospitals we want.	It is important that the key objections to decentralisation are understood and answered: • ‘Decentralisation is just a longer word for cuts’ • ‘Local people are incapable of managing public resources’ • ‘Nimbys will take over and stop all new development’ • ‘Reducing central control will increase the risk of failure’ • ‘Local control will result in a postcode lottery’	2
3	A plain English guide to the Localism Act	Nov-11	DCLG	<p>Power shift from Government to Communities and Individuals Big Society</p>		The rationale for dispersing power	For too long, central government has hoarded and concentrated power. Trying to improve people’s lives by imposing decisions, setting targets and demanding inspections from Whitehall simply doesn’t work. It creates bureaucracy. It leaves no room for adaptation to reflect local circumstances or innovation to deliver services more effectively and at lower cost. And it leaves people feeling ‘done to’ and imposed upon – the very opposite of the sense of participation and involvement on which a healthy democracy thrives.	We think that the best means of strengthening society is not for central government to try and seize all the power and responsibility for itself. It is to help people and their locally elected representatives to achieve their own ambitions. This is the essence of the Big Society.	3
7	The Implications of Devolution for England	Dec-14	Cabinet Office	<p>How powers have been passed to the devolved administrations Transfer of powers from central government to local communities in England Options for further devolution and decentralisation</p>			Localism and decentralisation is crucial in revitalising our cities and regions, but it does not and cannot answer the West Lothian Question. Introducing English Votes for English Laws, or English and Welsh Votes for English and Welsh Laws, is crucial and cannot be ignored any longer.	The Deputy Prime Minister said that “the West Lothian question...clearly needs to be settled” and that “we need a much more radical dispersal of power within England ...we must guarantee a new, legal right for local authorities to demand powers”.	7

Appendix 25 – Cont’d – Theme 3 – Identity

4	Building Safe Active Communities - Third Report	Feb-12	DCLG	<p>Building the Big Society Tackling problem drinking A ‘hub’ for community activists - two clicks to success Getting public servants out into the community</p>	IDENTITY	The characteristics that are required	Like Helen [Baroness Newman - Communities Champion], we strongly believe that by backing citizens and communities across the country, we can continue to grow a bigger, more active, safer society.	But it does require humility, goodwill and common sense among all agencies, from central government down. Simply put: join up or good intentions will go to waste. I’ve shown that joint partnership is indeed the most powerful and effective action by the examples in this report, so don’t just take my word for it: read the proof.	4
5	Ed Milliband - One Nation Labour	Jan-13	Fabian Society	<p>One nation Labour Confident communities Community organising to build relationships</p>			Turning this spirit of collective endeavour, of looking out for each other, from something we do in our daily lives, to the way our nation is run. That is what One Nation Labour is about. Taking the common decency and values of the British people and saying we must make it the way we run the country as well.	But here again the answer is not simply to carry on where we left off in government. New Labour was right to talk about rights and responsibilities but was too timid in enforcing them, especially at the top of society. And it was too sanguine about the consequences of rampant free markets which we know	5
9	A guide to community-centred approaches for health and wellbeing	Feb-15	PHE / NHE	<p>Why work with communities? Communities as building blocks for health A family of community-centred approaches Health outcomes and evidence</p>		The rationale for the characteristics	There is extensive evidence that connected and empowered communities are healthy communities. Communities that are involved in decision-making about their area and the services within it, that are well networked and supportive and where neighbours look out for each other, all have a positive impact on people’s health and wellbeing.	At a collective level, confident and connected communities provide the social fabric that is necessary for people to flourish. An equitable health system involves people in determining the big questions about health and care and actively removes barriers to social inclusion. That is why individual and community empowerment have to be core to efforts to improve the population’s health and reduce health inequalities.	9
10	The places we live in Gloucestershire	Apr-15	Barnwood Trust	<p>Friendly neighbours and a sense of community Communities and social capital</p>			Views on what makes somewhere a good place to live: people - friendly neighbours and a sense of community being able to access to a range of goods, services and green spaces	Many respondents mentioned several of the above responses together. This gave the sense that there was no single, defining characteristic of a good area or community but that a range of factors combined to make somewhere a ‘good place to live’.	10
13	Making a difference in rural communities throughout England 2014/15	Dec-15	ACRE	<p>Voice of rural communities Supporting communities to take action themselves Investment and making a difference</p>			Throughout 2014-15, Defra’s partnership with the ACRE Network has supported community led action in the key areas of local strategic influencing; enabling rural communities to take action for themselves; and sharing learning on sustainable funding models.	Our focus for 2015-16 is on sharing learning throughout the Network in order to develop sustainable funding models for the future. With such income, we can continue to do what we do best: delivering long-term benefits to those most in need in rural communities across England.	13
22	ITT Community Connectors Tender	Dec-16	GCC / GCCG	<p>Make use of strengths in the local community Create capacity in the community and grow the volunteer workforce Brokering collaborative working Developing local solutions to meet local needs Promoting innovation</p>			Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG) and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) want to improve the wellbeing and resilience of local communities and reduce reliance on statutory services through the Community Connectors Service; combining Social Prescribing and Community Agents.	Our approach has been informed by detailed engagement with the market, and the growing evidence base around Social Prescribing models and Asset Based Approaches across the country. This includes an evaluation of the existing Gloucestershire-wide social prescribing service, conducted on behalf of the CCG by the University of West of England.	22

Appendix 25 – Cont'd – Theme 4 – Relationships

6	The Five Year Forward View	Oct-14	NHSE	Empowering patients Engaging communities The NHS as a social movement	RELATIONSHIPS	A diverse and complex relationship	These changes mean that we need to take a longer view - a Five-Year Forward View – to consider the possible futures on offer, and the choices that we face. So this Forward View sets out how the health service needs to change, arguing for a more engaged relationship with patients, carers and citizens so that we can promote wellbeing and prevent ill-health. It represents the shared view of the NHS' national leadership, and reflects an emerging consensus amongst patient groups, clinicians, local communities and frontline NHS leaders	England is too diverse for a 'one size fits all' care model to apply everywhere. But nor is the answer simply to let 'a thousand flowers bloom'.	6
16	Joint review of partnerships and investment in voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in the health and care sector	May-16	DH / NHSE / PHE	Living well at home as part of welcoming, inclusive communities Release the full potential of communities. Below the radar groups Volunteering and social action addressing service-resistant problems like loneliness and stigma People and communities board		A joint relationship	In November 2014, the Department of Health, Public Health England, and NHS England initiated a review of the role of the VCSE sector in improving health, wellbeing and care outcomes.	Even those who do attend health and wellbeing board meetings can find the experience disempowering. In response to a survey by VONNE, VCSE representatives said the discussion often involves just "rubber-stamping" decisions made "outside of, and before, the meeting". This suggests that health and wellbeing boards alone cannot fulfil the need commissioners have to undertake systematic stakeholder engagement with the VCSE sector. This conclusion is reinforced by the latest NHS planning guidance which asks local areas to develop Sustainability and Transformation Plans which are much wider in scope than health and wellbeing boards.	16
11	Joint Enabling Active Communities Policy	Jul-15	GCC	Communities as a group of people with a common interest or identity or who share a common place Enable local communities to become more active, stronger and more sustainable Using the strengths of individuals, carers and local communities, to transform the quality of care and support Draw upon, and stimulate the provision of, the diverse range of assets within communities		A joint relationship	To improve health and wellbeing, we believe that by all working better together - in a more joined up way - and using the strengths of individuals, carers and local communities, we will transform the quality of care and support we provide to all local people.	Creating a knowledgeable community should: Enable people to resolve minor issues quickly and easily; Maximise access to, and utilisation of, appropriate services and activities; Help in the ongoing process of identifying issues where the community could 'step up' or where there is a real need for additional statutory services; Help deliver the aim of 'drawing upon community assets'.	11
12	Community Capital: The Value of Connected Communities	Oct-15	RSA	Connected communities Realising social value from community capital Value of connected communities - community capital dividend		A joint relationship	Our experience from the Connected Communities programme has led us to conclude that it takes engaged, deliberative, sometimes difficult work to release value from community capital. Effective communitarian public policy requires planning, careful engagement with people, the weaving and brokering of social networks, and ongoing support for communities. It cannot be assumed that we can simply cut back the state and expect perfectly-formed communities to spontaneously bloom and deliver the aims of the Big Society or to make up for funding shortfalls in the NHS.	Communities are crucial to achieving shared social outcomes and better lives, and connectedness is crucial for communities. The diverse work described in this report serves to illustrate the case for a Connected Communities approach to growing community capital. This approach, which can be practically distilled to the 'Understand, Involve, Connect' process (see Theory of Change and case studies, above), can be undertaken by public service professionals, socially-minded businesses, NGOs, community groups and others working with communities to create a range of social dividends.	12
17	One Gloucestershire - Transforming Care, Transforming Communities	Autumn 2016	GCCG on behalf of 'Gloucestershire System'	Creation of 16 health and social care communities around GP clusters / Social 'movement' Enabling Active Communities – building a new sense of personal responsibility and promoting independence for health		A joint relationship	Looking ahead, we believe that by all working together in a joined up way as 'One Gloucestershire', there is an opportunity to build stronger, healthier and happier communities and transform the quality of care and support we provide to all local people.	Our long-term ambition is to have a Gloucestershire population, which is: • Healthy and Well – people taking personal responsibility for their health and care, and reaping the personal benefits that this can bring. A consequence will be less dependence on health and social care services for support	17



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## Appendix 26 - Example reflective summary notes of interviews following transcription.

### **(HELEN) – Spring 2016**

(HELEN) works part time within the system in a role supporting older people, signposting and helping them navigate the system. Has a background in psychotherapy and provides sessions for that as well as the support and signposting role.

*Being mindful and having the time to be is a key thread for (HELEN), it is ok to not be ok.*

They are developing a role with their primary organisation to support and help provide supervision for others in that role. They have recognised that issues with come which being that local connection, the boundaries can become blurred. The nature of the role means they needed have a number of qualities, skills or capabilities e.g. to be flexible, mobile, responsive or creative. *There was a sense that you were always on call, particularly if you lived in or near the community, in a similar way to some of the comment from elected representatives. This is raises questions over what would it mean to be more visible / involved and present in a relationship when working with communities (Councillors, LEOs etc)?*

(HELEN) recognises that people need time to talk, not just when things are going badly, but also as a matter of routine and building resilience. Notes that that support / navigation roles can attract 'saviours' and that you need to be mindful of why you are doing the role – says is it '*to attend to something in your own self*'? So, recognises that there can be dangers and to keep people safe they need to talk. There are strengths and limitations inherent in taking on such a role.

Talks about people in the system with different 'heads' e.g. NHS head, adult social care line staff, county council heads. They all have a script / approach to way of working.

E.g.

- Advisers working to scripts have already decided what is relevant is knowing you
- The patient transport may take you to the hospital, but not to the department or unit within the building
- The clinician may have a role on the diagnosis, but they won't go to the funeral

The support / navigator role may well have to work differently or be less bounded if involved in someone's life. *Those in medical professional roles may not have the time to consider the wider social determinants of health, given existing pressures they are under, but is that productive in the long term?*

(HELEN) notes that working in community may well touch on our own losses given the complexity of lives. Sees the council as a '*distant*' place with '*lots of people in it*'.

*This description gave a sense of disconnection and distance, but also of resources, possibly inefficient implications perhaps, but also possibly strength given allusion to numbers. It could be a specific building in a place, or just a separate community in another land perhaps?*

Noted the turnover of staff, changes in people, criteria, forms – yet everyone is looking for an answer (which often means referral). This can lead to a duplication of roles, or lack of understanding of the consequences of decisions – e.g. DLA changes and anxiety / self-harm on recipients who've had funding cut.

*There was a real frustration that these approaches and decisions were often taken without proper consideration of the transition to a change, let alone the impact of the change itself.*

To be in such a boundary spanning role means you need to be able to think widely, think out of the box – building capacity can be about creating something new or harnessing something already there.

*How would that fit with other agendas to manage demand? Unless of course the level of control and design is such that it is completely complementary to existing agendas and activities.*

Lots of consideration given to the qualifications and experience that you might need – (e.g. if choosing less experienced people for GCC Local Engagement Officers as a development opportunity then maybe it misses the point of the role). (HELEN) noted experience, as there is a lot of ambiguity and 'moral maze' type decisions to make when developing relationships, signposting, navigating.

(HELEN) summarised much of this as 'positive risk taking' which was not easy. *This could link to wider appetite and approach to risks / concerns over complaints culture, FOIs, judicial review perhaps?*

An element of detective work required was required in understanding a situation when meeting someone or dealing with a referral. *This was different to a list of questions in a script, but still a collection of relevant information on which to make a decision.*

For example, spotting a picture of a partner who is now in a care home, a picture of a cat that has recently died. Individuals in such roles need to see beyond the particular issues at hand and look at the whole person. This type of analysis may have longer preventative / wellbeing benefits.

(HELEN) notes it is important to make good connections (has key contacts in the districts) people who can understand the problems and are experienced. You can have confidence that they will come back to you with an answer, based on the relationship already built up.

Had a personal period from the past which talks about as a 'black period' during school years, which has started to change as Facebook has been a route for old school friends to get together online. Has helped to reevaluate that time and 'go behind it' to see that it wasn't all as bad as they'd perhaps thought. *Similar perhaps in the need to see beyond current issues and look at the whole person when meeting a referred client.*

Had traumatic period of life with a stillborn child. In the end anger drove (HELEN) to set up a support group, as after left the hospital there was nothing there to help. Had to wait before could act, as pain still recent. By word of mouth and other routes eventually got a local group going, also had some personal therapy which helped.

(HELEN) had noticed that some people were coping better than others, and that to talk about things seemed to help. Realised that this had power and could therefore help others. Through that set up a local group which became very important. However, challenges of

getting burnt out – looking at lots of picture of dead babies etc. was incredibly hard to sustain. Then had own child and that caused tensions with others who were childless. *So getting out of a difficult situation does not mean it is all ok, others around you may find that hard.*

Notes: *'But what drove me was just the need to help myself. I needed to talk and I met other people who needed to talk and to understand. It normalised the insanity that most of us were feeling.'*

Had been through a couple of breakdowns and by doing this it was renewing – *'it was like I found my shoes'*...so something comfortable, practical, yet something that enables you to move on, go outside be a part of the world perhaps? Very conscious that even in close communities we often don't know what is going on. Many stigmas remain around mental health, illness, death etc.

### **(JEFF) – Summer 2016**

(JEFF) is in their 20s and has held a variety of roles, paid and unpaid. For example, working in housing support, as a special constable, and as a town councillor. They are keen to learn new skills - for example psychotherapy, hypnotherapy – in addition to their postgraduate studies. (JEFF) says this creativity around options and learning provides them with a sense of being in control of their own destiny.

Over time (JEFF) describes a personal transition in outlook, from feeling early in their career that they had to have it 'all together', be in control, competent and creating a strict separation between the person doing the job and their private life. They have also moved between 'hands on' roles and management as their career has progressed and are currently moving back into more 'hands on' roles whilst completing postgraduate study. They feel this makes more of a difference - that you can directly see the impact being made.

(JEFF) talks of there being 'general' community - a kind of place we all have a right to be a part of - but that things / life events can take us away from that. Things happen, can isolate or separate us from this and they believe a key part of recovery is about finding ways to link back into it.

*This belief (in part) could stem from their personal life where their mother had to flee domestic violence, moving them from one part of the country to another.* In addition, the move resulted in a change of lifestyle - from what was described as a middle-class estate to a council estate.

(JEFF) has strong feelings of social justice, perhaps also influenced by the change in lifestyle but also by their mother. (JEFF) recalled a significant childhood moment from school '*...It's one of those memories that really sticks with me...*' where a child was teased at school for wearing the wrong clothes. Something that (JEFF) realises was probably due to the child coming from a difficult and/or poor background. They recall their mother being very angry that (JEFF) had been a part of the teasing, reminding them that people should not make fun of others who don't have the same things / money that others have or are different. These circumstances might have been because of reasons that were nothing to do with them, it is not their fault and they should not have been ridiculed. The childhood memory and discussion were very vivid for (JEFF). *This perhaps linked to their outlook, passion and*

*commitments to awareness of difference, justice, society and class – that we should look out for those on fringe and focus on our commonalities?*

Feelings of social justice and the nature society played into (JEFF)'s education where sociology became an interest. However, (JEFF) couldn't quite see how this would link to the world of work – i.e. 'What does a sociologist do?'. Given the many contested concepts and 'fuzziness' of definitions within this area of academic study - how more difficult then to find a career that is clear, credible and easy to understand what you are doing, why, the impacts etc? However, for (JEFF) Community Development (CD) work was the practical application of learning more about society. To that end (JEFF) studied Community Development at Undergraduate level and is very aware of theories and concepts.

For example, they talk of Asset Based Community Development 'ABCD' – but feels that approach is possibly being professionalised too much. i.e. there is a 'right' way to do it and rules you must follow. There are limited options for creativity in its use. *Potentially becoming just another thing or form for people to fill in to demonstrate what they are doing is the right thing. Perhaps this is what 'matters' – to those commissioning or in positions of power - assurance and control, and going through the motions, ticking the boxes is what it is 'like' to work in CD these days?*

(JEFF) feels this also has implications for how any CD type roles are accepted (or not) by the people they work with and relate to. (JEFF) is not sure whether they should (or could) be accepted in an authentic way.

Alongside learning about society (JEFF) was also interested in being a policeman from an early age – a relative was in the force. Whilst there were elements of excitement, fast cars and having a uniform (*and perhaps linking to the need to be in control?*) *this might also be linked to fleeing from the bad domestic situation and a desire to right wrongs for others? Perhaps (JEFF) saw there were lots of dealings with police and other agencies over the years before their mothers' decision to finally flee that situation?*

However, many years later having joined the police as a special constable, an incident '...sat heavily...' with (JEFF). This was where a policeman responded to a call for a domestic situation – rolling their eyes and having quite a negative response. Whilst this may have been common and a depressing / run of the mill activity for the policeman, the attitude really affected (JEFF) '...it kind of set the whole tone really...'.

(JEFF) saw that life events, became incidents and incidents became part of the police processes. Crimes became a number – i.e. the professionalisation of activity not reflecting the human aspects and history on the ground. *At the same time this could link to comments about being a professional i.e. Do we play a part in creating a persona that can be easily measured and monitored because that what the system as such values?*

*Perhaps there was a sense that the outcome from their childhood was also not dealt with very well – perhaps (JEFF) was upset that the policeman had no idea of the pain and trauma that might lie behind those events – i.e. in a similar way that (JEFF)'s mother explained about the child at school who was being ridiculed.* Either way this moment meant that (JEFF) did not stay with the role and left, which shows how little things, communication styles etc. can have a big impact - even not if intended. *There are assumptions that we can make about situations (even if we've experienced them a lot) – but have we really understood the essence of the experience for others – have we become immune to seeing /*

*hearing it again anew? Is there a degree of bracketing that needs to take place in these instances? I wonder what the reasons were (JEFF) gave to the police force for leaving – do we complain or offer constructive feedback to those in positions of authority / trust?*

When (JEFF) talks about community it is often linked to geography – they have rented property in different places but feels comfortable now is on the property ladder. (JEFF) lives in an area that is not flashy, but also not a council estate. *Perhaps that comfort comes from being an owner of property, having a legitimate stake in the area – or just finding their own level within the structure of society perhaps?* (JEFF) has a child, which has been a surprise in the ways it provided links into community. They have met people that probably would not have spoken to normally. Children have been common link which can break down are assumptions – offering a shared point of reference in the community perhaps? (JEFF) notes that a lot of talk around children is about what you lose, but not necessarily about what you gain. *Do we not like to be proud of what we have – or is it that we feel embarrassed to be content, happy etc.?*

(JEFF) is very active in local politics and became a town councillor (without even having been met or interviewed etc!) in their local area. *Which shows how easy it can be to get involved in certain ways? Added to the feelings of property ownership and legitimacy within the community, perhaps this was also a focus for giving something back too?* That said, being a town councillor was not what they expected it to be. *Maybe more though needs to be given to managing expectations or properly exploring assumptions over what we think things are like, and how they actually are? Are any other activities required or things that could help with the transition? – i.e. accurate Job Descriptions?* Also, (JEFF) was a lot younger than other councillors and there were many vested interests (JEFF) perceived. The most enjoyable aspect for (JEFF) or where they felt had provided most impact was in a decision needing to be made where the answer was not clear. Good engagement, good local debate and then an informed decision could be made. This was what (JEFF) felt their role should be.

In their current work with people (JEFF) understands how hard it is for those with complex or chaotic lives to fit in or find ways to link into community. Often, they live in geographies where there aren't many constructive options for them to go to and socialise / get involved. (JEFF) says they are not often the 'nice people' of society – '...certain things they did in terms of offending that made it difficult for them to interact with the community. Just to have their own energy to partake in the community was really hard because of the impact of things like drugs so that was always quite a struggle'. *Do we value or understand neediness / weakness / addiction / old age / those with caring or support responsibilities – whether formal / informal. Do we assume that there is always blame / fault to be laid – problems and solutions? Who is 'really' deserving or not of our time? (e.g. disabled – mental / physical needs). Perhaps possibly an indictment of our culture?* (JEFF) talks to practical impacts of service changes they've witnessed over the years. E.g. in terms of longer 999 response times and the fear that can generate when having to deal with aggressive and challenging individuals. Changes have meant that the police, CD workers and people in general have less opportunities to meet each other. *These opportunities cannot be measured as such, therefore are possibly less valued, resulting in lower social capital perhaps? Having the time to build relationships etc. could break down barriers between people?* (JEFF) feels the end result of this is having less skilled people needing to do more.

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Appendix 27 - Excerpts from the development of key participant quotes, conceptual annotations into emerging and final themes

Participant quotes of interest and researcher annotations as appearing chronologically:

PARTICIPANT	AGE	GENDER	1	2	3
7	>50	M	<p><i>I've always had a therapeutic approach to my work, I think. That's kind of informed my work today, in that I've got a good background in that one-to-one work, good empathy, good understanding of people and a real breadth of knowledge of mental health, substance misuse, physical ill health, whatever you might call it.</i></p>	<p><i>Just through talking to somebody about what they're doing, I start to make connections... "Did you know that this was happening? You're good at that. How about we do something else with that?" That type of thing. Because we're an organisation and our approach is kind of, we're not fixed in any, we're not fixed on mental health, learning disabilities or running an art group. We try and do everything and anything depending on what people want to do, so we're quite creative.</i></p>	<p><i>No, no, no. I've been doing a lot of work on a personal level, in terms of my journey, if you like. It kind of goes back to my, it goes back to my upbringing. The reason why I've turned out why I am is, for me, partly because of my schooling back home. I went to a private school. I was sent to a private school. I reacted against it at the time. That, I just, I think experienced such a lot of bad things happening, that I became, in school, the person who supported other people. I think that's just continued throughout my life</i></p>
7	>50	M	<p>Contacts built up over career - fast pace of change / not always what we are looking for - very political</p>	<p>conversations are the basis of a lot of activity - little things matter - someone you can call on if you need some help</p>	<p>Resources are important but ideas are free</p>

Appendix 27 - Cont'd - Conceptual annotations regrouped into themes

Themes: EARLY DAYS / INFLUENCES / VALUES / PRINCIPLES						IMPORTANT EVENTS / PLACES / PROCESS				
P	AGE	GENDER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	30-50	M	Competition / motivations of previous generations that affect the present?	Childhood friend - important influence / now other childhood friends are involved	Does education prepare you for the future?	Lots of options but no long term plans	Early days are important after significant events / choices - moving home / changing job	Stigma around mental health remains	The importance of a safety net	Faith important part of making sense of Cdev work
2	<30	F	Perceived as someone wasting time when young - why are you doing this? Implications for young carers / prevention in the long term	Unware of options available - careers advice	Feelings of ignorance leading to action	Difficulties of starting something up - early days are important	Needing the right mindset to work in the VCS - but is the theory like the reality?	Chaotic nature of working with those who have particular needs fluctuating jobs etc. (link to variations in myths of them and us) - e.g.	Security in having someone 'professional' there - a safety net - link to AL's / KWs comments around police / PCSOs	Authenticity linked to how much people 'know' you - is that possible when part time and cover large geographical area?
3	>50	F	Is this about past inefficiencies as well as older pop / complex needs - even more reason to get past mistakes sorted / future solutions right	Parental influence v thinking for self and why? Role models and decision making	Chain of prior events to getting involved	Education and opportunity as a woman	Early days and skills required - level of emotion / experience and emotional experience!	Housing / roads an issue	little things make an impact - e.g. Active Together grants	

Appendix 27 - Cont'd - Participant quotes analysed and highlighted as 4 overarching themes developed

	Power	Problems	Relationsh	Identity				
12	< 30	M	Yes, there was a space on the council, as I don't think town council was popular... and they had some vacancies for a while, so I got in without actually them having ever met me. I just sent an email through and they just said yes, great, you are a town councillor then! Fantastic!	I was easily the youngest by ten years, probably a bit more. That made quite a difference in terms of fitting in as a group, in terms of a small community, but then also there were a lot of people putting their own personal opinions, it just didn't, I thought this would be a community reflecting the community.	It wasn't clear... it was a good thing or a bad thing and it seemed like actually there was a real purpose to the council to help people bring things together and work in a democratic way. I found that really exciting and I enjoyed taking part in that.	It was nice because it felt like an outcome that was debated, it felt balanced, it had the community opinions on it. It felt inclusive and that was nice.	So it didn't feel like the community around the... but I didn't feel like we were working with were inclusive community there, I wasn't really quite hard to get back into having some... with their time that might be the drug taking and coffee.	
13	30-50	F	I kept on with the support group and running that, as I just realised I knew it was a good and important thing. My friend and I were running it, but we both probably had the highest caring responsibility. She had three autistic boys...but we did it, probably because we saw the need most so we were most committed to keeping it going, and it nearly killed us. We got a bit of money we'd bidden for and had someone to help run it, and the family centre manager was supportive, but then the family centre became the childrens centre - suddenly they were managing four different places and couldn't support it.	Yes, there is more, you will always have that experience - but you will have other types of friends. Those people that I know from Allsorts. We don't meet up for drinks and do the usual things as no one has the time for that - but you feel connected. Facebook is a good thing to keep in touch and get advice. Everyone starts off in that "normal" community and realises they are not so connected. I mean not everyone has that experience but it's not perfect - but I think friends get on easier (in my experience) more easily with a child that has a physical disability rather than a learning disability. They engage with the fundraising for the special wheelchair, they get on board more quickly. As soon as there is the behavioural stuff with a LD they are not so sure what to do - they may not have met someone with that type of disability. It all gets a bit difficult. One of my best friends was telling their 6-year-old when T was 7 that he was "a bit slow". That doesn't really help! That doesn't quite explain what the situation is! The gulf, T can function in some areas like a 6-month-old. So, I think the learning disability is quite challenging.	It's like saying - I don't know how you cope, I couldn't...it's like you are something special, a miraculous human being! The worst comment is "special babies choose special parents". It's so lovely, but complete b**locks!! We are just human beings, I am not coping - there are families in Syria with children like T coping with things. There's always someone worse off. You cope with what you are dealt. Coping is a really difficult one. Not coping with T is really scary, because it means he'd be 400 miles away in an inpatient unit. What is coping? Coping is not making that call to say "come and take him away". So, you are constantly anxious, feeling on a knife edge, on antidepressants because I fixate on what would happen if I can't cope. That becomes more of a worry day to day. To somehow be told in some way you are chosen one because you are so amazing is hard. That's not how it works! They can't quite contemplate that it could have been them.... I don't know what it is.	Lots of training for clubs, activity clubs, so meant there was support for inclusion training for free. Just to be able to say "it's not this great mystical thing. You need to talk to the parent to think about how you can include their child". There were a lot of myths around that. For an awful lot of parents with children less needy than T there are more things more inclusivity, a more inclusive picture.	We meet parents who... know your child has not you are going to get any been biting his brother, you have to go on this because we think its you ago, someone who has challenging, a single mum won't get this much support because he will have good condition of challenging, list of high level list of people just constant.	
14	30-50	F	We can get caught up in the negative - we can be stuck in a deficit mode. I try to be mindful of the asset based model. I like to look at communities in their richness. I try to look at people and the interactions and have conversations. The most ingenious answers often come from lived experience of communities, the solutions are there. I try to tap into that.	There was a young guy there, he had been through the process, he was optimistic, but he was quite damaged and seen others who had been too - and he had struggled to find a job. But I could see the young kid was positive, and business minded. I said that to him and asked to come and see me. He came, and he had ideas, but putting his ideas to a decision maker... or anybody else, his communication, and his whole personality - it's not that he was not articulate - but it wouldn't have fitted into the system or model and no one	Yes, I could see his persistence and that he really wanted it. He wanted it bad. He was persistent. I introduced him into other investors etc. and there was lots of support. He gets excited when he gets connected as its now just taken off. He asks "why do you believe in me?" He had been around for a while trying to sell this idea. I come across a lot of people - and I can tell if it's not going to work, or hasn't been thought out, or whether they want it so bad. I could see the qualities and he just needed a little bit of help, and he would go all the	thinking of myself, working in the field for 30 years I know about the different organisations and have access to lots of organisations - so I know whether they are visible or not, or ok as I have lots of connections and can influence in my own way. I can effect change easily, email someone or find out things. That's not the same for other organisations and communities. But that's due to the way I work. I don't just work on race, I work across a whole range of partners and issues which brings a lot of opportunity for contacts and connections. That's how I am. I	I think that might be a bit City - we assume that communities know what and it will work, there is together. That might be communities, for example football club and we all self-sustaining. In more communities (although	

Appendix 27 - Cont'd - Summary of linkages between early and final development of conceptual themes



P	Early Review of Themes	Theme linkages	Conceptual Themes	Conceptual Detail / Subtheme	Theme linkages	Review of themes following interview completion
1	Acceptance / validation by others	Identity?	Relationships	The extent of honesty / vulnerability / empathy / being known	Identity?	ABOUT BEING WITH OTHERS / RELATIONSHIPS
13	Being heard / understood / accepted / tolerant			The extent of assumptions / judgements		
8	Influencing others	Power?		Being a representative	Power?	
15	Validation / acceptance / recognition - pride in the community			Being a member		
6	Being heard	Identity?	Power	Having some influence over the messages	Problems?	EVALUATION / DEFINITION / MEASUREMENT
3/5	Getting things done (visibly)			Being flexible with the outcomes		
12	Being seen to act justly and receive justice	Relationships?		Listening in engagement, learning through participation	Relationships?	
7	Connections between people and the system	Relationships?	Problems	No time to properly think / reflect	Identity?	IMPORTANT EVENTS / PLACES / PROCESS
17	Complexity of the system			Lack of opportunities		
16	Complexity of people	Power?		Disempowering definitions / discourse / requirements	Relationships?	
9/10	Being credible	Problems?	Identity	Who am I working for?	Power?	EARLY DAYS / INFLUENCES / VALUES / PRINCIPLES
14	Credibility / justice			Why do I do what I do?		
19	Being balanced / credible			How do I make a difference?	Problems?	
2/4	Being able to influence	Power?		How to take opportunities?		
11	Being credible and validation			What is the best use of my time?	Relationships?	



Participant quotes

Again, for me I think people are  
 It occurred to me that I am wor.  
 Something comes to me and I t  
 ...in my own personal view and

I think what people don't like is  
 Leadership (they saw in me), ar  
 Ultimately its whether I am corr  
 It wasn't clear [local planning d

Yes, it is. It is, it's just a network  
 Ooh, I don't like the word [emp  
 They [local charities and groups

Although my job suggests I am  
 That is what I mean by where I,  
 [The organisation] lost its main  
 I'm like a lot of people I manag  
 ...it felt like I had been quite ign  
 I will always be a better strateg  
 To me it is constant mindfulness:

Appendix 28 - The creation of overarching and subthemes across the four areas, linked to reviews of the literature and initial analysis.

Theme 1 - Problems

Initial coding	Reflections	Literature links	Participant	Early Review of Themes	Conceptual Themes	P	Conceptual Detail / Subtheme	Participant quotes
Places and Projects	Challenge of delivering holistic or integrated services, and describing the outcomes for charitable funders is difficult. Are we measuring the right things and is there the time to get an answer? E.g. if issues are long term and generational?	Evaluation / Models / Case Studies	17	Complexity of the system	Problems	1	Lack of opportunities	Someone new comes in, spends two years doing amazing work and building up great connections, and is just starting to do the real work, but then they get promoted and move on. Then someone else comes along and you start the whole process again. As a member of the community who's seen 10 or so police officers come and go in this way, I think to myself "should I really be bothered investing my time into getting to know the next one?"
Finance	Austerity is not new, struggles to make ends meet or access funding / resources has been restricted for many decades	Resilience				13		We tried to call the social worker and for two weeks, to get hold of her to talk about it, to say we were shocked. She was at training, in meetings. Then we got a letter to say it had gone to panel and budget was cut. We got hold of her manager, and I said we'd supposed to get a copy and agree it before it went to panel. The manager said 'nothing to do with me, I wasn't there, that's nothing I've said to you - I don't know what she said to you'. She said 'You can complain, but it won't change the decision (she must have said 30 times) but it wouldn't change the decision'.
Reorganisation and Impact	'7 day' services or stepping up are not new for those volunteering / caring	Carers				18		As I said a bit earlier, we know we have got to hand things over but we want to be prescriptive about how we do it. Actually sometimes you have got to take a leap of faith. Sometimes somebody's got to fail, but it will not be everybody, but you have got to trust people to get on with it.
Reorganisation and Impact	Commissioning can assume change is required, new is always good	Engagement / Participation / Evaluation / Models / Case Studies				7	Time to think / reflect	... it's just a network of people [working with other groups / organisations]. But it's also a willingness to acknowledge that there are some relationships that either just don't work or are never going to work, so you just have to accept that and move on. I think some people struggle with that. They think they ought to work because there's so many common areas. But I've tried that with people and it's fallen flat sometimes. But that's because they've got different agendas, or they just don't share the same vision and passion and that's fine. There are always those people out there, you've just got to find them, which is the trick.
Little things - Big Impact	Use of language e.g. 'professionals', 'stepping up', 'capacity' divorced from lived experience	Empowerment / Resilience / Behaviour				1		We are constantly being asked to go to consultations and fill in surveys...and then when you see any sort of outcome, you think 'well it's a waste of time' anyway...
Importance / passage of time: Slow	Responsiveness of state - too slow - e.g. complaints	Empowerment / Participation / Engagement				12		They don't know how hard giving back is. Do you know what I mean? They think - oh I am coming through the door to help the youth club, because that is giving back to my community - they'll spend two hours at a youth club with kids screaming running round and being sick and pop being spilt on them, and they go oh no, I've got to do something else and give back somewhere else! It is not easy, it is not easy work, and older people are hard to work with, set in ways and so on, and people that are in a dark place they are really hard to work with as well!!!
Importance / passage of time: Quick	Responsiveness of state - too fast - e.g. commissioning	Empowerment / Participation / Engagement				11	Disempowering definitions / discourse / requirements	they are often [call handlers on the adult social care line] who have no idea and they have to go through separate forms and things used. "It is not relevant". I do remember once being asked by somebody: "Does the gentleman have difficulty getting in and out of the bath?" ...He had not had a bath for about 10 years, so I started to laugh. I said 'Not relevant' ...Then they said: "No - I need to know". I said 'really it is not relevant, he doesn't have a bath'.... "Does he have a shower?" No. "What does he do?" ... "Not a lot". (laughter) I found it just so funny, none of the questions were relevant.
LEO Role	Low visibility / relevance of GCC and GCC LEOs, comms approaches and content. Challenge to use the resources effectively and agendas they might have.	Engagement / Participation	7	Connections between people and the system		16		Just as he turned the radio off from the [Police] control room he said "oh domestic" and rolled his eyes, and that actually I felt that set the tone a bit really. I don't think he was being negative about it, but he had dealt with so many and dealt with the particular part of the process and was not very open minded about it. That kind of frustrated me in the end and I found actually that inside the police it was a process so rather than dealing with the person you were dealing with this crime, whether it has been a crime, they even sort of use that.... and it comes with an incident number and becomes an incident day and becomes a set of evidence and becomes very detached from the person.
			16	Complexity of people				



Appendix 28 – Cont'd – Theme 3 – Identity

Definition of Community	Balance of three 'R's for participants when discussing community – 'Role(s)' how they describe community in the context of what they do, 'Romantic' what they think it should be like, and 'Reality' how it feels on the ground – its complex	Boundary Spanning	11	Being credible and validation	Identity	4	What is the best use of my time? <i>That kind of tension between what you wanted to be spending your time doing and what you actually ended up spending your time doing, I really struggled with and it took a lot of energy out of me. So by the time I finished it I was pretty much burnt out looking back.</i>	
Attitudes towards involvement	Community development can be a selfish activity – in a good and bad way	Networks / Behaviour				15		<i>So quite a lot of people don't work in that community sector any more, they have got other 'proper' jobs. More secure jobs....because that is the problem with community projects, even my job, my contract ended in theory in January, we are almost a bit month to month now to see whether we can afford to keep me. That is the nature of community projects and not everybody can afford to or likes to be in that position, where your job is in the balance.</i>
Thinking about why or conceptually	Little space for personal reflection on own story and future	Empowerment / Resilience						
Being Hands On	There is a time when being hands on is enough and need to move on, having to start again	Resilience	14	Credibility / justice		14	Why do I do what I do? <i>[The organisation] lost its main funding 5 years ago, and in a way it's one of the best things that happened for me. As things were closing down regionally I was faced with...I had to ask myself why I was doing this. Was it for a salary or myself, or was I doing this because it was something deep down within me? I still had to find a job, so I was not looking for funding to sustain myself. The reason for doing this work was around friends, social justice, contributing to and changing the world. When I had answered that question, I think I was comfortable to continue. I think you always have to be honest with people, as well as understand yourself.</i>	
Progress and Promotion	Accessibility / Listening – important personal attributes	Empowerment / Resilience / Behaviour						
Being Hands On	'Professionals' don't feel hands on enough (or credible?), yet those in 'hands on' positions don't always feel listened to – what is driving this / who is the target audience?	Motivation						
Faith Trust Belief	Language of faith / belief – in people, that things will be ok, the future is secure	Volunteering / Motivation / Behaviour						
Boundary Spanning	How do they make sense of the interplay / complexity of community facing roles?...Not something routinely shared / possibly fear of looking foolish, being too personal. Remains contradictory and conflicting	Motivation / Behaviour				11		<i>To me it is constant mindfulness of your boundaries – who am I doing this for? I think that is a very useful question to ask. Am I doing this for the client, is this for the client? Is it to attend my own self? Something...which means it doesn't belong. That's just personal – I would do that.</i>
Places and Projects	Place or a sense of 'home' is important	Motivation	9/10	Being credible		9	Who am I working for? <i>Although my job suggests I am involved in community - in my personal life I am not at all and I don't necessarily feel very engaged in things, in the community I've lived in for nearly eight years.</i>	
Influential People	Personal and formative influences / people and significant events – how that influences the present and whether people wish to get involved or walk away.	Volunteering / Motivation / Behaviour				16		<i>Even though I have been here years, I have worked the project for twenty years, I am still not quite classified as a [local] person, because [the area] is actually rooted with different families that have been here for years and years and years, they don't go far, so you will have the daughter who will move into the next road and the son will move into the next road and build their families and their families stay, and so on and so forth....</i>
Schooling	Relevance and preparation of education system to choices / decisions when working in Community Development.	Empowerment / Evaluation				10		<i>That is what I mean by where I feel I have no impact [working in local government with communities] and it is embarrassing. You know there have been a couple of occasions where people have asked if they can do things themselves and I have had to go back and say no.</i>
						12		<i>I am only [under 30] now, I am more aware now that I am young than I was when I was younger. I think I was much more kind of keen to demonstrate that as a 19, 20 year old going into work that I knew exactly what I was doing, I had it all sorted and I was really keyed in and clued in and professional....close it all down. That is not to say, I don't think I get emotionally tangled up now, but actually having emotion and passion and drive is not a bad thing, it is a good thing. But you can make sure you are safe within that.</i>
			19	Being balanced / credible		19	How do I make a difference? <i>I'm like a lot of people I manage in that I like being head down in the screen doing something. If they [team members] come with a problem I like to help them. Equally when I am trying to then balance the needs on a day to day basis of the team....In the back of my mind I'm having to think about what is it that drives them. How can I help all of them get what they want out of their day and work together as a team?</i>	
						4		<i>I will always be a better strategist than I will be a community worker. That is not to say that I couldn't do it but actually this is a much more comfortable fit for my personality than that ever was. But I suppose I value incredibly the fact that that is where I cut my teeth. I think it gives me credibility with some of my colleagues that I sit around the table with. I think it gives me a bit of insight into what really matters in these places that sometimes my colleagues lack.</i>
			2/4	Being able to influence		2	How to take opportunities? <i>...it felt like I had been quite ignorant [of child asylum seekers] and I hadn't known all the stuff that had been going on...I felt like really angered. But in an inspired way - I was like, oh this is really rubbish, this is really bad and I really want to do something about it.</i>	
						4		<i>I think the county council struggles to behave in that joined up way, the [committee] struggles to behave as a coherent whole because they have all got separate interests and these are people that are paid by the same organisation and have a strong incentive to behave collectively. Why would this expect this to happen out in a voluntary sector with a thousand different interests where actually it is driven much more by passion? So I think actually we were expecting quite a lot of the sector.</i>
						14		<i>We can get caught up in the negative – we can be stuck in a deficit mode. I try to be mindful of the asset based model. I like to look at communities in their richness. I try to look at people and the interactions and have conversations. The most ingenious answers often come from lived experience of communities, the solutions are there. I try to tap into that.</i>
						7		<i>I think it's somebody who's non-judgmental, you know, has an open mind in terms of how things can work and not too rigid in their thinking. I think it's about being empathetic; you have an understanding. It's about..... (long pause)....Yes, I don't know what else to describe the personality really.</i>

Appendix 28 – Cont'd – Theme 4 – Relationships

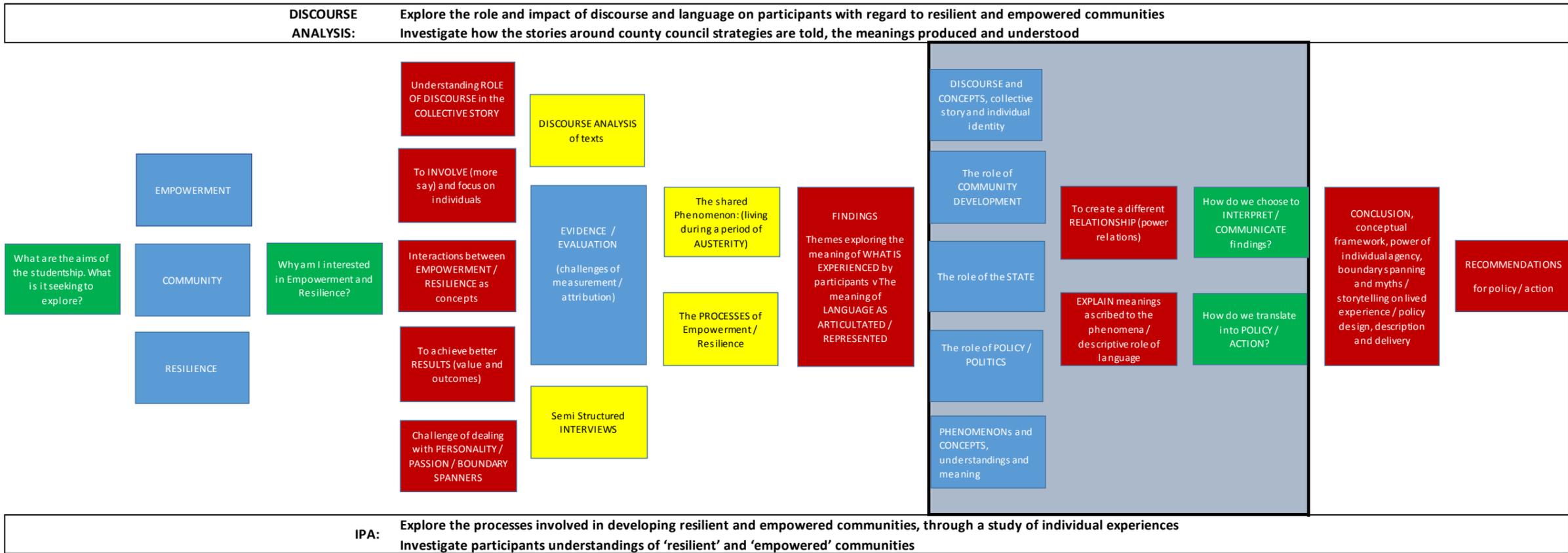
Consequences	Individuals versus policy for delivery at scale – sense that certain orgs / individuals are preferred	Models / Case studies	15	Validation / acceptance / recognition - pride in the community	Relationships	15	Being a member	...in my own personal view and the way I have always kind of viewed it, is the [community project] played such an important part in my life growing up - as many of these kids around here do. My childhood was just rubbish, we just had horrendous situations going on with alcohol abuse and domestic violence and for me the [project] was just my lifeline. Without them I would have never gone to university, never have done any of those things that I have done and I would not be the person I am now. For me I have always had that, it is in me, I cannot let the place go, so whether that means I am paid or voluntary, I do whatever I need to do to keep the place going - to make sure that the kids here now who are going through similar and even worse situations are afforded that opportunity.	
Discussion of Feelings	Fears – of change / coping / commissioners taking ideas or losing funding / councillor support / advocates	Motivation / Behaviour					5		Yes, that's right. I think there are three categories of people I find. There are officers who are very like – 'The Councillors they are special people'... E.g. 'Yes, [Councillor]!... Yes, Yes, Yes!', and those that don't really understand them, not trained, not aware of how things work - and those who are slightly contemptuous of Councillors who think we are a pain in the arse and just not to be known.
Qualifications and Training	Chains of relationships / events / experiences can build skills not just qualifications	Empowerment / Networks / Evaluation					8	Being a representative	Something comes to me and I think actually 'is there something I can offer to this, based on my experience, knowledge and my passion?' ...so then I'd get involved. If I then feel I cannot influence or make a difference, then I might decide it is time to withdraw.
Importance / passage of time: Quick	How you are disadvantaged / accepted can be rapid. Judgements and assumptions.	Behaviour					14		thinking of myself, working in the field for 8/9 years I know about the different organisations and have access to lots of organisations – so I know whether they are visible or not, or ok as I have lots of connections and can influence in my own way. I can effect change easily, email someone or find out things. That's not the same for other organisations and communities. But that's due to the way I work. I don't just work on race, I work across a whole range of partners and issues which brings a lot of opportunity for contacts and connections. That's how I am. I can't say the same for others. I am not sure if they would have a clue where to start. It comes back to personality, particularly where people work on their own in an individual way. As much as I challenge I am mindful that the only way I can bring change by getting in to the mind of the person I am trying to reach and say 'imagine this'. Some people I sit with do not know what it means to be black or have experienced racism. So I try to take people on a journey, but make it clear that it will be hard. I am not typical in the way I operate. In the BME community they don't feel connected at all, or have a voice to any bit of the state.
Faith Trust Belief	Myths, storytelling, assumptions – Significant events, organisations, attitudes, approach to / relationships / commissioning / tendering / fundraising / monitoring / reporting / job descriptions	Behaviour					4		I think from all 3-4 of the roles that I have had, the strong sense that I have been left with, is the extent to which the tensions that inevitably come up between communities and institutions are so much more driven by misunderstanding and lack of understanding than by any deliberate attempt to antagonise or do the wrong thing
			1	Acceptance / validation by others			1	The extent of honesty / vulnerability / empathy / being known	Again, for me I think people are really important and being with people and supporting each other, I think that is the only way we move forward with anything. So I am a part of this community and if I want any quality of lifestyle then the community has to move forward and I can be a part of that and support that and that is a two-way process. It kind of annoys me when people talk about community workers are altruistic, I don't think we are, I think we are quite selfish to be honest, because actually I want a good community for when I am older to support me.
							9		Although I support that from a professional point of view, I would hate that from a medical point of view, if I was in that scenario I just don't feel that I would engage in that at all. It just would not be the way that I would go about it. 'Just give me the pills pal, and I'll go home'...and hopefully I feel better. Yes, but from a professional point of view I recognise that is not the way that we can continue as a society, but I just find it really difficult...it is often the community based stuff that falls into that category.
							2		obviously people know who I am but not as in – Oh it's so and so, she is a community worker – you know there are some people who you just know and everyone knows them.
							15		I think it would do people good to come out and meet the people who deliver the services that they are allocating money to. Because you get this thing where people sit in their offices and read an application and decide if someone needs money or not, maybe they would benefit from coming out and actually seeing what happens in communities and not just sit in their office thinking they know. Like I said for lots of people they never go outside of [the neighbourhood] all their life because they were little here, grew up here and they die here. All right that is fine if that is what you want to do, but for us it is about making sure that they know that is not the only option. It is fine if that is what they want to do, [the neighbourhood] is a great place to live, and it is lovely to have a really nice supportive community, but actually there is a big wider world out there and you can have more opportunities and explore more of it.
			13	Being heard / understood / accepted / tolerant			13	The extent of assumptions / judgements	It occurred to me that I am working in a bureaucratic organisation, have a degree, but I'm struggling to get heard...and I'm kept being told 'I know we've got your name wrong, there's a few mistakes in the assessment, that happens but...'...but I thought 'no,no,no – you don't understand...how can people comment on the accuracy of my complaint when they don't know my son, have never met him?'
							16		You have then got to be non-judgemental, you have then got to be very calm and not say what you really want to say, do you know what I mean?... calm, non-judgemental, understand their life situation, have some empathy and start all over again.

Appendix 29 - Excerpts of definitions of community, empowerment and resilience

P	Definition Community	Process / Definition Empowerment	Process / Definition Resilience
7	Where people feel safe, where people know people when they walk about, others look out for them	People being better integrated into the community, feeling more part of their community, having a wider social network and possibly being more skilled in things or feeling self-esteem, better about themselves. Encouraging ideas and common ground. To do something for themselves, enable people to see the strengths that they've got, giving them permission to do things, a chance to explore being who they are, being themselves, with no great expectations. Feeling different about life in a good way.	Resilience means, for me, is an ability to survive. It's about having the inner strength to be able to manage whatever's thrown at you or the day to day life or whatever situation you're in and having the resources to deal with your own levels of anxiety, frustration, you know, whatever might be there. So yes, to be resilient you've got to be able to draw on your own strengths and, yes...
8	... a place where live but also the people that share and do things with, and being active. Wanting to be involved	Experiencing and coming through difficult times. Having confidence to speak up even if younger - having time to listen before speaking up too. Giving organisations or people the confidence... and if you have that power - the tools to be able to do things for themselves.	Experiencing and coming through difficult times. How individuals and communities respond to something that doesn't go how they expected it to go, when something goes wrong - how they then can deal with that.
9	Areas of interest, work, geography where people come together. Any kind of social structure that supports this and the needs of people	Putting other people in control of, allowing people to be in control of their own lives I suppose in the broadest sense. No making decisions for people, making them with people and allowing people to decide what is best for them. Awareness of needs.	Time taken to understand the system and relationships. An individual's ability to hold their own, to look after themselves and look after the ones that they are closest to.
10	Connections to each other. Something in common, and they get together to either celebrate or work.	...A bit of stepping down and letting go to allow people the freedom to be able to do what they want to do. But I think it builds.. giving them what they need to be able to do something, on the same footing as you, skills or maybe even funding sometimes.	Being able to face the issues and overcome them and keep calm and work through the bad.
11	It is very caring, it is very practical and proactive. Being involved with others and taking time out for them. Social media to become aware of new communities.	Giving time to people, having fun, talking about things that are not relevant....to enable talking about the heart of the matter - as things are tough and going to get tougher. Local support may not reflect national support.	Mindfulness of boundaries and who are doing things for (your own need or others?). Social media for support. Awareness of how you are coping / falling apart - recognising some can cope better than others - asking why...and what could be the benefits of following that path?
12	People you know, you have a connection, you don't feel alone, you feel like you have other people you can speak to. Local area	Community reflecting the community, including people with meaningful things for positive impact. Having the ability to make own choices to achieve their goals, things that they want to achieve.	Balance of personal safeguarding / boundaries and willingness to go deeper with people. Feeling included - connecting people. The community being able to care and support all the people within that community and having the ability to do that on an ongoing basis.
13	Something you can participate in - and aware if you are outside of it (normal community) working together on joint projects, getting people to enjoy the environment	Confidence in looking at facts / not just emotions of experience in terms of changing things. Overcoming doubts / thoughts. Coping day to day, awareness of other peoples issues. Giving people information, because you may not be able to another time - taking advantage of situation. Confidence to deal with own issue / attend meetings etc. helps feeling of giving back and feeling good about yourself. Being able to ask questions - and be listened to...and being 'arsy'! Advocacy to help communicate between council.	Can change with age or understanding of system / reference points. Different levels of capacity / coping. Facts v feelings and stress. Recognition of history / baggage instead of assuming it can be built quickly. Not necessarily something that can fully recover after previous hits. Sensitivities will remain - not a one of discussion / conclusion. Having a supportive partner, sticking together - falling apart at different times. Social media to provide points of contact / support.

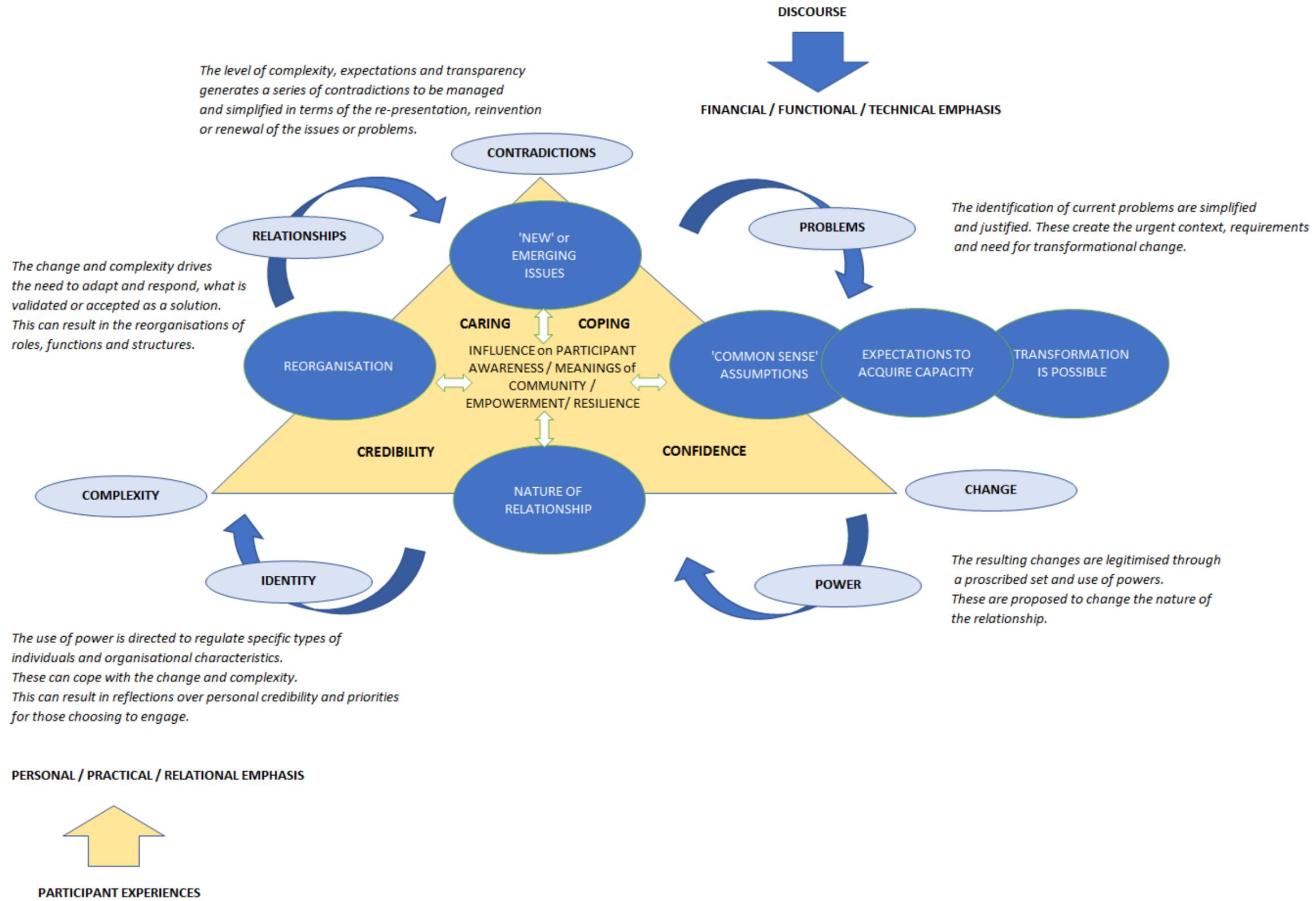
Appendix 30 - Diagrammatic representation of thesis structure. Grey shaded area notes position of Chapter 8 within the thesis

**The development of resilient and empowered communities in Gloucestershire during a period of austerity**



KEY:   
 Literature Review / Background / Context   
 Questions / Issues   
 Method / Data Collection   
 New / Original / Importance

Appendix 31 - Example illustration of research context, emphasis of approaches and thematic findings



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Appendix 32 - House of Commons Liaison Committee (2016)  
Oral evidence: Follow up to the Chilcot Report, HC 689

*Researcher emphasis in italics and commentary in italics*

*Evidence based decision making*

Q12 **Chair:** You are saying, as far as I can tell, that it was not *reasonable (common sense)* for Tony Blair to suppose that there was an imminent threat, based on the information in front of him.

**Sir John Chilcot:** He said—I think I am now quoting from his foreword to the September dossier—that his belief was that that was the situation. *What was not mentioned in the dossier, or in his parliamentary speeches (simplification of problems), were the qualifications and conditions that the various JIC assessments had attached to them (complex, changing and contradictory),* which meant that statements made with certainty could not be supported by that kind of evidence.

Q13 **Chair:** I think you are saying that it was unreasonable of Tony Blair. **Sir John Chilcot:** *I would rather not use that particular word. (use of language)*

Q14 **Chair:** You may rather not, but I am asking you. It seems to me that it is a binary state of affairs. *Either it was reasonable or it was not. That is a very well understood concept in law and in common parlance. (common Sense)* Was it reasonable or unreasonable?

**Sir John Chilcot:** If you place yourself in the position at the time, in 2002 and 2003, *there was enough advice coming forward not perhaps to support a statement that the threat to the United Kingdom, its people and interests was imminent (context for community)* but, none the less, *that a threat might be thought to exist. (Problems)* Now, there was not such a threat in fact and in the event. The supporting intelligence—

Q15 **Chair:** No, that is not what we have been talking about at all. We have not been talking about “in the event”. We are talking about before the event. Every question that I have posed to you concerns only the evidence available to Tony Blair at the time that he made these statements. *(divergence and convergence of meaning)* I will repeat the question: was it reasonable for Tony Blair, at the time that he made that statement, to suppose that there was an imminent threat?

**Sir John Chilcot:** Objectively, no. Subjectively, I cannot answer for him.

*Timeliness and decision making*

Q16 **Chair:** You mean that he might have had a *sudden rush of blood to the head, or that he may just have made a misjudgment. (pressure to act and make decisions quickly)* Is not that what “subjective” means in this context?

**Sir John Chilcot:** “Subjectively”—and it is addressed in the report in this sense—means that he stated that it was his certain belief at the time. That is subjective. You asked an objective question of whether it was reasonable to entertain that belief, to which I said, “The evidence does not sufficiently support it.”

Q17 **Chair:** I haven't, actually. I have asked a question that is the well understood test of a reasonable man. *Would a reasonable man—another human being—looking at the evidence come to that conclusion? (hierarchy of evidence)*

**Sir John Chilcot:** If you are posing that question with regard to a statement of imminent threat *(pressure to act and make decisions quickly)* to the United Kingdom—

**Chair:** I am.

**Sir John Chilcot:** In that case, I have to say no, there was not sufficient evidence to sustain that belief objectively at the time. *(Resilience, pursuit of questions to elicit answer)*

Q18 **Chair:** So he misled the House *(Community)*, or set aside evidence in order to lead the House down a line of thought and belief with his 18 March speech, didn't he?

**Sir John Chilcot:** Again, you force me into trying to draw a distinction between what Mr Blair, as Prime Minister, believed at the time *and sought to persuade the House and the people of... (context for community)* —

**Chair:** Of course. I am asking you whether it was reasonable that he was doing it.

**Sir John Chilcot:** As things have turned out, we know that it was not. *As things appeared at the time, the evidence to support it was more qualified than he, in effect, gave expression to. (transparency and optimism)*

Q19 **Chair:** That is not what you have really been saying all along, is it? It is not a question of whether it was more qualified. This is a test. It is a test of whether a reasonable man would conclude that this evidence supported going to war.

**Sir John Chilcot:** If I may say so, that seems an easier question for me to answer, because the answer to that is no.

#### *Involvement and decision making*

Q47 **Mr Wright:** So the system has to flex in order to take into account perhaps the personal style and characteristics of the Prime Minister of the day. Is it also a function of the growing consolidation of executive power into a single figure *(Power)* - The Prime Minister of the day: almost a 21st-century equivalent of Louis XIV's "I am the state"?

**Sir John Chilcot:** I observe what can be described in that way. I think it reached a high point in Mr Blair's prime ministership *(tacit knowledge)*. I have a memory from taking evidence from his Foreign Secretary, Mr Straw. *We asked how it was that members of the Cabinet (Community)—other than Robin Cook and to a lesser extent, I suppose, Clare Short—did not provide more challenge (context for empowerment), and insist on debate and information. They were promised it sometimes, but the promises were not delivered (what was preached and what was practised).*

The answer that came back was quite simple. It was that Tony Blair had, as Leader of the Opposition, rescued his party from a very dire political predicament *(avoidance of discomfort)* and he had done that again afterwards as Prime Minister *(transformation)*. I had the sense from Mr Straw's reaction that he had achieved a personal and political dominance *(Power)*, that was itself overriding if you like *(tacit knowledge)*, the doctrine of collective Cabinet responsibility.

Q48 **Mr Wright:** The power of patronage held back proper discussion.

**Sir John Chilcot:** Patronage particularly, perhaps, yes, but also just sheer psychological dominance. He had been right; was he not right this time? (*Identity*) That is the sense I took from Mr Straw's evidence.

#### *Transparency and decision making*

Q49 **Mr Wright:** That is very helpful. In your view, then, the Cabinet system throughout all of that, was it disregarded? Was it just bypassed? What had happened? *Presumably, as you said in the report, had there been more effective challenge and scrutiny perhaps some of the weaknesses in the evidence would have been teased out a lot more.* (*divergence and convergence in meaning*)

**Sir John Chilcot:** *Things were decided without reference to Cabinet (Relationships) —for example, the acceptance of responsibility for four provinces in the southeast of Iraq (acquisition and transformation). If anything was a Cabinet-scale, Cabinet-sized decision, that surely was it. It never went near Cabinet. (dilemmas of community development)*

More generally, Cabinet was promised it would have a hand in the decision on major deployments to and in Iraq (*functional, financial, technical*), and that never took place. We did an analysis of all of the Cabinet papers, minutes and meetings throughout the relevant period, and we published a great deal of that material. *Quite frequently, the Cabinet itself was simply being given information updates, which were not always of a completely detailed or updated kind (recurring patterns of behaviour). There was very little substantive Cabinet discussion leading to a collective decision (Relationships), and that seems to me to be the lack that is characterised, certainly throughout the period of 2002 to 2006 or so (recurring patterns of behaviour).*

#### *Resilience, empowerment and decision making*

Q50 **Mr Wright:** I understand your earlier point, Sir John, about how the system had to take into account the psychology and the style of the elected leaders of the day (*relational v functional considerations*), and in that regard it has to flex. To what extent does the civil service have to be a custodian of proper, effective Cabinet responsibility? Lord Turnbull told you that nothing was wrong with that, and that there was no problem with that sofa-style Government—he disregards that phrase. *To what extent should the Cabinet Secretary be saying, "This is wrong, Prime Minister; you need to be doing something here"?* (*dilemmas of community development*)

**Sir John Chilcot:** *The role of the Cabinet Secretary, and I was in contact with all of the surviving ones, retired as well as serving, is, to some degree, determined by his—perhaps one day, her—relationship with the Prime Minister of the day (tacit knowledge). There is also, and this was clearly accepted by all of them, a clear responsibility to the Cabinet as a collective and its members as individual, responsible departmental Ministers. (personal, practical, relational)*

*I think if I have a purpose today it is to encourage all my successors, as colleagues at the top end of Whitehall, to take their courage in both hands and insist on their right to be heard, and to record what their advice is, even if that advice is not taken. (context for resilience and empowerment)* It is entirely for Ministers to decide, but it is for senior officials, and I

would include senior military in this as well, to state very clearly their best advice to their masters (*Empowerment*).

*I think the recording of that advice, and the recording of any discussion about it, is absolutely central, because that guarantees, if you like, a degree of willingness to challenge or a duty to challenge, which, in a sofa/den setting, simply isn't there. (ideal)*

**Q51 Chair:** It is the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary to make sure that Cabinet Ministers have that opportunity, isn't it? (*ought*) That is set down in the Cabinet manual, is it not?

**Sir John Chilcot:** Yes, but—

**Chair:** Are you saying that, in this case, that wasn't observed?

**Sir John Chilcot:** You can't, as it were, override a Prime Minister's instructions to a Cabinet Secretary or, indeed, lack of instructions (*actual*) to a Cabinet Secretary.

#### *Evidence based decision making*

**Q52 Chair:** Should the Cabinet Secretary have taken a direction in that case?

**Sir John Chilcot:** It would be open to a Cabinet Secretary in dire straits to do just that. There is a famous historical example from the Suez war in which the Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, instructed the Cabinet Secretary, Norman Brook, to destroy all the records of the secret dealings with the French and the Israelis. *As a dutiful and loyal servant of the elected Government, Norman Brook did, and wrote a minute on the file, saying: "I have been so instructed and have so acted". That is open to historical inquiry. (dilemmas of community development)*

## Appendix 33 - Excerpt from Government response on Community Rights (March 2015), relating to researcher FOI request and specific enquiry regarding recommendations 12 and 13

### ***Researcher emphasis in italics***

Government response to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights

#### Introduction

1. The Communities and Local Government Select Committee launched an inquiry into the Community Rights on 9 June 2014. The Committee published its report on 3 February 2015.
2. The Committee has grouped its recommendations around the individual rights and then recommendations aimed at future community engagement. *This response addresses all the recommendations in the report.*
3. The Government welcomes the report *and has considered all the recommendations carefully.*

#### Background

4. The community rights are an important element of the Government's wider drive to devolve power and responsibility to the lowest practical level, *matching local enthusiasm with real influence in order to put power in the hands of communities and make it easier for them to take control.*
5. The Community Rights to Bid, Build and Challenge and Neighbourhood Planning were all newly introduced as part of the Localism Act 2011. The Community Right to Reclaim Land was an expansion of Public Right to Order Disposal. This was introduced by the Local Government and Planning Act 1980, and gave powers to the Secretary of State to order the disposal of vacant or underused land held by local authorities and a number of named local or national agencies. Linking into the new community rights agenda, the Government decided to treat vacant and underused land owned by government and its agencies in a similar way on a non-statutory basis.
6. All the rights are complemented by other community-centred policy initiatives within the department, such as our support for Community Shares – a way for communities to raise money by offering shares to local people in a community venture, with over £50m raised since 2012; the Our Place programme which is supporting over 150 communities to work with local public services, the voluntary and community sector, and business to agree neighbourhood priorities and how address them; and our work to make it easier to establish new Parish Councils.
7. On 17 February we announced our Community Rights support programme for 2015-16 which is the primary vehicle for our work over the next year. £6 million of funding is supporting this which includes a greater focus on peer to peer support, networking and sharing the learning from current programmes.

8. *The Government welcomes the Committee's consideration and conclusions; the timing is particularly helpful given our stated intention to carry out post-implementation reviews on the Community Rights to Bid and Challenge later this year.*

### **Community Right to Challenge**

#### **Recommendation 12**

We recommend that the Government find out what has happened to groups receiving capacity-building assistance and to those that have made EOIs under the Right to Challenge process. (Paragraph 46)

30. We accept this recommendation. *We have recently contacted all groups that have received specialist support through both the Community Right to Challenge and Community Ownership and Management of Assets programmes asking them about the impact of the support they received on their organisation and what they have achieved since. This includes questions as to whether they have submitted an expression of interest under the Community Right to Challenge, whether they have taken part in a procurement exercise and whether they have won a contract. This will supplement surveys carried out by our support provider, Locality, of organisations that had contacted the advice service, carried out in 2013 and 2014.*

#### **Recommendation 13**

We recommend that the Government work with local authority commissioners of services to involve communities routinely in the design of services; consider whether certain services might be reserved for community enterprises using either a normal tendering route or a Community Right process; and rename the Right to Challenge in order to reduce the perception that it is confrontational. (Paragraph 50)

31. *We will work with local commissioners to examine the impact of the Community Right to Challenge and to consider other means to achieve its broad policy aims.*

32. We already engage on a regular basis with local commissioners in order to promote greater use of voluntary and community sector bodies, as well as neighbourhood approaches to service delivery.

33. Programmes such as the Commissioning Academy also stress the importance of working with communities to focus on outcomes. We have jointly published a set of practical case studies for commissioners to use; including examples of community led commissioning – <http://publicservice.transformation.org/resources/commissioning/better-commissioning-public-services>.

34. Additionally, programmes such as Our Place and Delivering Differently in Neighbourhoods *are focussed on involvement of communities in the design and delivery of services and will lead to more collaborative approaches to commissioning in local government.*

35. We acknowledge the impact that the branding of a particular power can have, and as the Social Investment Business pointed out, the name of the grant support programme for the Community Right to Challenge and the Community Assets programme, was changed to stress its wider applicability to community and voluntary organisations wishing to build their capacity to deliver contracts or acquire assets for community use. *We do not see that*

*a wholesale name change is needed, but we will work closely with our support partners going forward to ensure that the language that we use around the right is as open and non-confrontational as possible.*

**Initial FOI - April 2017**

Dear Department for Communities and Local Government,

Could you tell me if following the Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights:

a) If the DCLG has requested any information, data or statistics from any relevant authorities or relevant bodies on the right to challenge as outlined in the Localism Act?

b) If the DCLG has received any information, data or statistics from any relevant authorities or relevant bodies on the right to challenge as outlined in the Localism Act?

c) If any summaries (partial or complete) of the numbers of challenges have been attempted or are held by DCLG - whether created by DCLG or a third party, and could be shared?

In the Government response to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights (Recommendation 12) it is noted:

'We have recently contacted all groups that have received specialist support through both the Community Right to Challenge and Community Ownership and Management of Assets programmes asking them about the impact of the support they received on their organisation and what they have achieved since. This includes questions as to whether they have submitted an expression of interest under the Community Right to Challenge, whether they have taken part in a procurement exercise and whether they have won a contract.

d) Is any information or data available on the specific questions asked, numbers of responses received, and any action taken following receipt of responses?

In the Government response to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights (Recommendation 13 para 31) it is noted: 'We will work with local commissioners to examine the impact of the Community Right to Challenge and to consider other means to achieve its broad policy aims'.

e) Is any information or data available on the specific local commissioners the government is worked with, if this group has stated or summarised its conclusions on the impact of the right to challenge and other means that have been considered to achieve its broad policy aims?

**DCLG Response May 2017**

This request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I am writing to advise you that I have established that the information you requested is not held by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Brought in by the Localism Act 2011, the community rights are fundamental to helping communities to take greater control and exercise more influence over what is happening in their local area and influence better service delivery. Since 2012, we have put in place a number of programmes to build social

capital and embed a broad understanding and adoption of the rights among stakeholders, ranging from local authorities to Voluntary and Commercial Sector and community groups.

**Follow up to DCLG reply May 2017 (no response received following chase email / phone calls)**

**Dear Despatch Box,**

Thank you for the response, although I do not feel it directly answers the questions I have asked. To clarify in terms of your response to my question:

1. Questions a/b - are you saying DCLG do not hold information on any requests made by DCLG or received by DCLG from local authorities or relevant bodies on the right to challenge as outlined in the Localism Act?
2. Does that therefore mean you have not made any requests, or you have - but do not hold any responses?
3. Question c -again are you saying no summaries have been made, or they have but DCLG (or a third party) do not hold it?
4. Question d - I am struggling to understand how there can be a government response stating actions that have happened, yet in terms of the previous answers it is stated that the information is not held. Are you saying that whilst you had (at that time) 'recently contacted all groups' - there were no responses, hence you hold no information? At the very least I am confused as to why the specific questions referred to in the governments response are not held by DCLG? Are they held by a third party?
5. Question e - Again I am confused as to what has happened following the government response. Are you saying that work has been undertaken 'to work with local commissioners to examine the impact of the Community Right to Challenge', but you hold no information on that? Or has an examination of the impact of the Community Right to Challenge not been undertaken following the government response?

Yours sincerely,

**James Evans**

**Rewritten FOI – Submitted July 2017**

Dear Department for Communities and Local Government,

1. Could you tell me if following the Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights:

Q1. Do DCLG hold or not hold information on any requests made by DCLG or received by DCLG from local authorities or relevant bodies on the right to challenge as outlined in the Localism Act?

Q2. Has the DCLG made any requests, but does not hold any responses?

Q3. Have any summaries (partial or complete) of the numbers of challenges been attempted whether created by DCLG or a third party, and could they be shared?

Q4. If the information is not held, can you confirm that it was held at the time of response to the select committee or afterwards, and the reason it has since become unavailable?

2. In the Government response to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights (Recommendation 12) it is noted:

'We have recently contacted all groups that have received specialist support through both the Community Right to Challenge and Community Ownership and Management of Assets programmes asking them about the impact of the support they received on their organisation and what they have achieved since. This includes questions as to whether they have submitted an expression of interest under the Community Right to Challenge, whether they have taken part in a procurement exercise and whether they have won a contract.

Q5. How many groups received specialist support referred to in the response?

Q6. During what date range were the groups contacted?

Q7. Is the basis for the information forming the response to the select committee able to be shared? This would include number of responses received, the groups contacted, impact of support and achievements since and action taken by DCLG.

Q8. Is an example of the correspondence able to be shared, including the list of questions sent?

Q9. If the information is not held, can you confirm that it was held at the time of response to the select committee or afterwards, and the reason it has since become unavailable?

3. In the Government response to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights (Recommendation 13 para 31) it is noted:

'We will work with local commissioners to examine the impact of the Community Right to Challenge and to consider other means to achieve its broad policy aims'.

Q10. Has an examination of the impact of the Community Right to Challenge been undertaken following the government response?

Q11. If so, on what date and which commissioners were involved?

Q12. If the information is not held, can you confirm that it was held at the time of response to the select committee or afterwards, and the reason it has since become unavailable?

Yours faithfully,

James Evans

**September 2017 DCLG reply following delays and request lost due to corruption by servers**

I am dealing with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and aim to send you a response by 17 October 2017.

If you have any questions, please ask by return email. Please leave the subject line unchanged when replying, to make sure your email gets straight to me.

Yours sincerely

Ashwin Jolly  
Deputy FOI Business Partner

### **October / December 2017 & January 2018 DCLG replies**

We are handling it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We do hold some of this information, but unfortunately I will not be able to give you a response within the normal 20 working days. I need additional time to give extra consideration to the public interest in releasing it.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows this when one or more qualified exemptions apply to the information. In this case the exemptions I am considering are s36 of the Act, concerning prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs

I estimate that it will take an additional 20 working days to take a decision on where the balance of the public interest lies. Therefore, I will respond to you by 14 November 2017.

### **Complaints procedure**

If you are unhappy with this response, we will review it and report back to you. (This is called an internal review.) If you want us to do this, let us know by return email within two months of receiving this response. You can also ask by letter addressed to:

Department for Communities and Local Government  
Knowledge and Information Access Team  
1st Floor NW, Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London, SW1P 4DF

If you are unhappy with the outcome of this internal review, you can ask the independent Information Commissioner to investigate. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at email address [1][\[email address\]](#) or use their online form at [2][ico.org.uk/concerns](http://ico.org.uk/concerns) or call them on 0303 123 1113.

Yours sincerely

Ashwin Jolly  
Deputy FOI Business Partner

**MHCLG FOI reply February 2018**

**In response to your individual questions:**

**1. Could you tell me if following the Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights:**

**Q1. Do DCLG hold or not hold information on any requests made by DCLG or received by DCLG from local authorities or relevant bodies on the right to challenge as outlined in the Localism Act?**

Requests were made, *however these were undertaken informally* as a follow up to our 2013 and 2014 review of users of the Community Right Programme that was delivered by Locality and Social Investment Business. This included following up on progress with groups to ascertain how they have benefitted from the assistance received from the support programme and undertaking analysis of case studies.

**Q2. Has the DCLG made any requests, but does not hold any responses?**

Yes, requests were undertaken through informal meetings and telephone conversations. *We hold no formal survey responses.*

**Q3. Have any summaries (partial or complete) of the numbers of challenges been attempted whether created by DCLG or a third party, and could they be shared?**

See attached summary of our *statistical findings* correct up to Feb 2016. The spreadsheet also contains a summary of our 2013 & 2014 surveys that were undertaken – requested below.

**Q4. If the information is not held, can you confirm that it was held at the time of response to the select committee or afterwards, and the reason it has since become unavailable?**

Information was held for the periods 2013 & 2014 - contained in the attached.

**2. In the Government response to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights (Recommendation 12) it is noted: 'We have recently contacted all groups that have received specialist support through both the Community Right to Challenge and Community Ownership and Management of Assets programmes asking them about the impact of the support they received on their organisation and what they have achieved since. This includes questions as to whether they have submitted an expression of interest under the Community Right to**

***Challenge, whether they have taken part in a procurement exercise and whether they have won a contract.***

***Q5. How many groups received specialist support referred to in the response?***

Up until March 2015, 369 groups were supported through the Challenge support programme, including 227 who accessed financial assistance.

***Q6. During what date range were the groups contacted?***

Surveys of the Community Right to Challenge support programme users were undertaken in 2013 and 2014. Follow up to the *these surveys were carried out informally* over 2015 and 2016.

***Q7. Is the basis for the information forming the response to the select committee able to be shared? This would include number of responses received, the groups contacted, impact of support and achievements since and action taken by DCLG.***

Results of the survey for Community Right to Challenge is attached.

***Q8. Is an example of the correspondence able to be shared, including the list of questions sent?***

An example list of questions sent to Community Right to Challenge users is attached. *These are not the final drafted questions*, however. The final draft would have been completed and held by the organisation commissioned to deliver the support programme. *The attached draft would have been close to what was used.*

***Q9. If the information is not held, can you confirm that it was held at the time of response to the select committee or afterwards, and the reason it has since become unavailable?***

Not applicable.

***3. In the Government response to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the Community Rights (Recommendation 13 para 31) it is noted: 'We will work with local commissioners to examine the impact of the Community Right to Challenge and to consider other means to achieve its broad policy aims'.***

***Q10. Has an examination of the impact of the Community Right to Challenge been undertaken following the government response?***

Yes. An *internal light touch* review was undertaken by Officials.

**Q11. If so, on what date and which commissioners were involved?**

The Community Right to Challenge review sought the views of local authorities, parishes and community groups over the summer of 2015. This included hosting a roundtable attended by representatives from local authorities and the VCS, speaking directly with groups who have used the Community Right to Challenge and analysis of case studies. The review *was undertaken by Officials*.

**Q12. If the information is not held, can you confirm that it was held at the time of response to the select committee or afterwards, and the reason it has since become unavailable?**

Not applicable.

**Researcher follow up questions to FOI response – April 2018, no response received**

Dear Despatch Box,

Thank you for your response. Could you clarify the following from the documents sent to me please?

Regarding the following questions:

Q5: You note 227 groups accessed financial assistance in your response. In the attached document '140109 Review of Right to challenge Redacted' you state supporting 245 organisations to develop EOIs, with around 25 being submitted. £1.9m is stated as supporting feasibility work / service delivery - could you confirm how the figure of £1.9m relates to the numbers of organisations listed in your response?

Q7: Could you confirm which element / document or tab within the attached information contains the Community Right to Challenge survey results you refer to?

Q8: Which organisation completed the final draft of the survey and the date it was sent?

Q11: Is the review referred to here the same as noted in the attached document '140109 Review of Right to challenge Redacted' where you state '...Given that the provisions only came in in June 2012, the scheme is relatively new. We think therefore it is too early to carry out a formal review of its impact in 2014, instead we plan to begin this process in the Summer of 2015 (around 3 years from implementation of the Right to Bid regulations.'?

Yours sincerely,

James Evans

**Internal review requested by researcher - July 2018**

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